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Playing with Movies: Film-to-Game Adaptation Form and Contexts

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Bond University

Playing with Movies:

Film-to-Game Adaptation Form and Contexts

Scott James Knight

Submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

2018

Faculty of Society and Design

Professor Jeff Brand and Assistant Professor Sven Brodmerkel

Abstract

Licensing and franchise exploitation has remained a major industrial factor throughout the history of commercial videogames. Film tie-ins represent a significant aspect of the videogame industry (Blanchet, 2010; Brookey, 2010; Hall, 2011) due to the economic opportunities of cross-media promotion, branding, and synergy (Aarseth, 2006; Long, 2009; Johnson, 2013). A significant aspect of the identity of movie-licensed games is their historical association with intrinsic poor-quality (Montfort & Bogost, 2009; Russell, 2012), setting a pattern of disreputability (Elkington, 2009).

Film-to-game adaptation is a complicated and problematic process that cannot be understood by textual analysis alone. This thesis argues that the phenomenon can be more fully understood by creating a framework which uses a combination of textual, contextual and paratextual approaches. It proposes a series of adaptation models that describe the practice of film-to-game adaptation, drawing upon adaptation theory, film and game aesthetics studies, and transmedia storytelling scholarship (Jenkins, 2009; Wolf, 2012b). It investigates the similarities and differences between ludic and cinematic forms, and analyses the relationship between concepts of adaptation and transmediality. Whilst a majority of adaptation studies consider novel-to-film adaptation, this thesis deals with strategies of adapting a non-interactive work into an interactive one, known as interactivation. Whilst the thesis draws upon existing adaptation scholarship, its value is in the application within the realm of game studies. This thesis deals with adaptation issues within the sphere of contemporary entertainment media. The value of this research is in its incorporation of multiple perspectives within a wider system that sheds light on cultural, industrial, and textual issues, further providing insight into the practice of film-to-game adaptation.

The thesis places film-to-game adaptation within its historical context, charting the phenomena from the earliest period of the commercial videogame industry to recent trends in large-scale entertainment to create multi-film interconnecting and amalgamated entertainment franchises (Balio, 2013; Elberse, 2013). Complex industrial and textual questions are negotiated in relation to film-to-game adaptations by analysing a group of case study games in terms of three frameworks: the contextual framework,

which includes developer accounts, critical reception, and player reaction; the paratextual framework, which includes adaptation system and transmedia state; and the textual framework, which foregrounds issues of narrative form and seriality, world-building, and interactivation. It is these combined frameworks that provide valuable insight into this practice.

This approach to film-to-game adaptation establishes three main models that demonstrate the ways in which games provide the possibilities of reflecting, intersecting, and extending the source film or film property. Case study games exemplify each model: *GoldenEye 007* (Nintendo, 1997) and *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* (LucasArts, 2006) illustrate the Reflection Model; *Blade Runner* (Virgin, 1997) demonstrates the Intersection Model; and *The Thing* (Vivendi Universal, 2002), *The Warriors* (Rockstar, 2005), and *Alien: Isolation* (Sega, 2014) enunciate the Extension Model.

This study significantly contributes to the existing scholarship as it produces outcomes with the potential to expand intellectual endeavour in adaptation and transmedia studies, to provide a guideline for industry with regard to convergent media, and to give shape to contemporary creative practice. This study demonstrates meaningful differences between media types and provides an articulation of issues of transmedia convergence.

Keywords

Adaptation, Film-to-Game Adaptation, Transmedia

DECLARATION BY AUTHOR

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis represents my own original work towards this research degree and contains no material that has previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

Scott James Knight

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Theorising Film-to-Game Adaptation. Digital Games Research Association Australia Symposium. June 2014, Melbourne University, Melbourne.

Disreputable Remediation: The Poetics and Reception of the Movie-Licensed Game as 'Bad Object'. International Communication Association Regional Conference. October 2014, QUT, Brisbane

From Unlicensed to Transmedia: Trends in the Historical Poetics of Film-to-Game Adaptation. Film & History Association of Australia & New Zealand Conference. March 2015, QUT, Brisbane.

Films into Videogames: The Practice of Transmediality in Film-to-Game Adaptation. Australian Screen Production Education & Research Association Conference. June 2016, Bond University, Gold Coast.

ETHICS DECLARATION

NA

COPYRIGHT DECLARATION

NA

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This project has indeed been a marathon and it is with infinite gratitude that I dedicate this work to my loving wife Karen. I may have lived, breathed and even dreamt this thesis but one thing is certain: without her, my dreams would not have made it to the page.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A:I: Alien: Isolation

KotOR: Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic

LSWII: LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

PJKK: Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie

Note on in-text citation of game titles

All game titles are accompanied by the name of the publisher along with the year of original release in the first instance in-text.

Introduction

This thesis investigates how videogames are adapted from films in an assessment of the intersection of ludic and cinematic forms. I propose a series of adaptation models which describe the practice of film-to-game adaptation that I have developed from adaptation theory and scholarship on transmedia storytelling. I place these models within a wider framework that incorporates industrial, cultural and textual dimensions, in order to provide insights into the phenomena of movie-licensed games.

Film-to-game adaptation is a problematic process and as such, movie-licensed games have a widely-held reputation as "bad objects." However, a very small percentage of games that are considered successful adaptations does exist. This thesis creates a framework to analyse movie-licensed games and constructs models of film-to-game adaptation using adaptation and transmedia studies, applying this to a selection of intrinsically excellent cases, in an effort to provide an understanding of the form, process of development, industrial and cultural position of the phenomena.

The relationship and intersection between film and game is surrounded in debate, which has intensified as commentators claim that "games are becoming more like films / films are becoming more like games," and so a potential way to approach this debate is to study the process of direct translation across media forms. When looking at film-to-game adaptations, also referred to as film tie-ins (Gray, 2010; Kinder, 1991; Meehan, 1991), it is clear that they make up a significant portion of commercial videogame form; iteration, serialisation, and franchise exploitation are major industrial factors more often than not with regard to videogame releases (Aarseth, 2006; Elkington, 2009; Gray, 2010; Johnson, 2010). From an industrial perspective, these games are bound to release deadlines that must coincide with the theatrical release of the associated film (Elkington, 2009) if the game is a synchronous release title (Aarseth, 2006). This results in an enormous pressure that usually manifests in rushed schedules, thus the movie-licensed game suffers as quality is consequently treated as a low priority compared with the financial necessity of meeting the deadline. In some cases, projects are abandoned

due to the complexity of production management, as in the instance of Pandemic Studios' unreleased *The Dark Knight* game (Wildgoose, 2009).

Historically, film-to-game adaptation has been strongly associated with intrinsically poor-quality, as with the infamous case of the *ET: The Extra Terrestrial* (Atari, 1982) game for the Atari Video Computer System (VCS). Not only did the *ET: The Extra Terrestrial* videogame set the pattern of disreputability for all future console generations (Montfort & Bogost, 2009), a number of game historians consider its release to foreshadow the 1983 US game industry crash (Donovan, 2010; Russell, 2012; Wolf, 2012a). Film-to-game adaptations have cultivated a reputation in both industry and player culture as "bad objects," seen as little more than an opportunity to exploit the hype surrounding the release of a major film (Nutt, 2008). Exemplifying this negative association, Elkington (2009) refers to the phenomena of movie-licensed games as "self-defeating adaptations." Further, the term created by adaptation scholar Constantine Verevis to describe problematic adaptations, "BADaptation" (2014), operates here.

The economic opportunities of cross-media promotion are clear, and media scholars have analysed the relationships within properties for some time. Kinder's (1991) early study of cross-over media content within "entertainment supersystems" examines properties such as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, while studies by Brooker (2001b, 2012) position the complex cultural economy of figures such as Batman. More recently however, cultural and textual issues of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2006a) and associated studies (Harrigan & Wardrip-Fruin, 2009) have established a significant position in contemporary media studies (Aldred, 2012a; Dena, 2009; Giovagnoli, 2011; Rose, 2011). It is the purpose of this thesis to apply these concepts to the issue of film-to-game adaptation in order to articulate the proposed models.

Few scholars have addressed the phenomenon of film-to-game adaptation and so a systematic investigation is needed to provide an understanding of this complicated creative practice. The following chapters explore how games adapt existing film properties in instances where a film (or film series) is the basis for the subsequent game. My aim is to systematise and model the phenomenon through a selection of representative case studies chosen for their high-quality reputation within game design and critical discourse. Many of the case studies are based on high-profile films or exist

as part of a well-known film series. Each of these works may be considered significant examples of a film-licensed game. These six case studies represent various permutations of each adaptation model.

Scope

This thesis explores the phenomenon of "licensed games"—videogames based on existing media properties where the owner of the property's copyright must grant a license to a publisher or developer, thereby allowing them rights to be able to create a game based on copyrighted elements (Russell, 2012, pp. 16–18), such as a title, a key image, a logo, a character, a screenplay, an entire film, or even a "universe."[1]

The process of "adaptation" as defined by Wolf (2012b), is "when a story existing in one medium is adapted for presentation in another medium" (p. 245). A primary focus of this research is concerned with games that adapt plot events, characters, situations, moments (Brown & Walters, 2010), or exhibit fictional narrative timelines consistent with the source film (or film series). Games that utilise particular elements of the licensed film property, but have a tangential relationship to the source film, are mentioned but not analysed as part of the corpus of case studies. The thesis will not consider internal intellectual property cases, game-to-film adaptations, or the presence of games in films referred to as the "technoludic film" by Bittani (2001). Even though many authors include television-to-game adaptations when discussing film-to-game adaptations, it was decided to deal solely with film hypotexts for the sake of focusing and limiting the scope of this study.

It is important to note that an exhaustive survey of film-to-game adaptations is beyond the scope of this thesis. For the purposes of restriction of scope, this study primarily examines AAA games and Hollywood film licensing (neither of course the only models for either medium), using six case studies released between 1997 and 2015 mainly on consoles. Other studies on the topic such as Hall (2011) provide an extensive overview

[1] A "universe" refers to the fictional space in which the property exists, also sometimes referred to as the diegesis or the "story world" (Bordwell, 2008, p. 90).

of movie-licensed games in commercial context, while Blanchet (2009, 2011; Jenkins, 2009d) offers comprehensive statistical information.

Methodology Overview

In his study of film remakes, Verevis (2006) argues for a broader approach to encompass what earlier scholars have marginalised. In doing so, Verevis proposes three categories from which remakes can be approached and understood: industrial, textual and critical. Verevis's approach opens up the remake framework to acknowledge the network of relations between commerce, textual fidelity, and reception. Verevis's conceptualisation provided new understanding about remakes and this study endeavours to incorporate all three of these factors in an effort to situate film-to-game adaptations in a fuller cultural and critical context. In doing so, the methodology of this thesis employs a combination of approaches.

Each case study is analysed using a three-pronged approach analysing the textual, contextual, and paratextual. The textual approach synthesises the formalist film and game theory from Chapter 1, while also reconfiguring the theory of textual adaptation from Chapter 2. Here, the textual approach examines five aspects: first, the narrative strategies at work in the game adaptation and how adaptation strategies manipulate the narrative of the source film. Second, gameplay strategies at work in the game adaptation—what Franz Mayra (2008) refers to as the "core" of the videogame—game mechanics, issues of agency, and player control are considered here. Third, the aesthetic or stylistic strategies existent in the game adaptation are examined—what Mayra (2008) refers to as the "shell" of the videogame. Fourth, issues of game genre: here, theories of film and game genre and their interconnections are assessed on a case-by-case basis. And fifth, tone and theme: this is the dimension of meaning, affect, and understanding, modulations of which arise from the combination of the aforementioned strategies (narrative, ludic, and stylistic).

The contextual register is presented in two parts: the developer account and the critical and player reaction. The developer account provides an attempt to understand the creative intention primarily on the part of game developers, but in some cases it may

provide insight into the complex and guarded relationship between the license holder and the licensee. In the case of film-to-game adaptation, this pertains to the relationship between the film studio, the game publisher, and the game development studio: the film studio possesses the rights to the source film property on which the adaptation is based, the game publisher oversees the development process with a mind to ultimately take the finished game to market, and the game development studio is the team responsible for the production of the game. The critical reaction component provides impressions from professional game reviewers in order to indicate the critical reception of the game adaptation, while also offering a general perspective of its place within critical game culture. Player reaction is gauged to give insight into how players evaluate these works. The third register is that of the paratextual. Here, case study games are located and discussed in terms of their position not only in relation to the film source, but within their respective franchises as a whole.

This thesis takes a critical studies approach to game form (King & Krzywinska, 2006a, 2006b), incorporating formalist analysis (Myers, 2010), structuralism and new media theory (Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Manovich, 2001), applying these approaches to a close reading (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2011; Consalvo, 2006) of a series of case studies. The critical studies approach considers games as an aesthetic phenomenon (Raessens & Goldstein, 2005) and can be seen in the work of Juul's formalist approach (2001, 2004, 2005, 2007). Similarly, Mayra (2008) refers to the textual analysis of games when discussing employing the "humanities methods" to games study research projects. The thesis subscribes to perspectives taken from film studies and applied to games as discussed in King and Krywinska (2006a). Lankoski and Bjork (2015a), and Fernández-Vara (2015) articulate frameworks for studying the formal analysis of gameplay, and the present research draws upon these in its approach to case study textual analysis. Finally, Olsson's (2015) game-oriented perspective on creating research projects is also incorporated in the research design of this thesis.

In an effort to understand the relationships between the commercial enterprise of licensing and cross-promotion (Aarseth, 2006; Johnson, 2010), the thesis provides a level of historical and industrial contextualisation in the case study discussions (per Brooker, 2001a). A sensitivity to game history (Dillon, 2011; Donovan, 2010; Kent,

2001; Wolf, 2007, 2012a) informs the overall thesis, placing it within the realm of historical poetics (Jenkins, 1995).

Justification

This study significantly contributes to the existing scholarship as it produces outcomes with the potential to expand intellectual endeavour in adaptation and transmedia studies, provide a guideline for industry with regard to convergent media, and give shape to contemporary creative practice. This study demonstrates meaningful differences between media types, and provides an articulation of issues of transmedia convergence.

Literature Overview

One of the primary motivators of this study is the need for a sustained theoretical investigation of the topic of film-to-game adaptation. As such, the thesis draws on various strands of scholarship in order to provide a comprehensive synthesis of key ideas germane to the topic as outlined below.

Scholarship: Film / Game Intersection

The formal qualities of film and games are identified and analysed within the domain of film aesthetics (Bordwell, 2007a, 2008; Bordwell & Thompson, 2013; Clayton & Klevan, 2011; King, 2000, McClean, 2007) and game aesthetics (Aarseth, Smedstad & Sunnanå, 2003; Atkins, 2003; Collins, 2008; Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith & Tosca, 2008; Jarvinen, 2002; Jenkins & Squire, 2003; Jones, 2008; Juul, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Myers, 2010; Nitsche, 2009; Tavinor, 2009; von Borries, Walz & Bottger, 2007; Wilson, 2007; Wolf, 2001). The intersection of games and cinema is given a developed focus by games scholars (Howells, 2002; King & Krzywinska, 2002a, 2002b, 2006a; Ndalianis, 1991, 2003; Wolf, 2001) and it is this work that provides the comparative analysis with a core formal dynamic.

Scholarship on Film / Game Narrative Theory

Much work on game narratology (Aarseth, 1997; Crawford, 2005; Wardrip-Fruin & Harrigan, 2004; Harrigan & Wardrip-Fruin, 2009; Jenkins, 2004; Juul, 2001; Murray, 1997; Wolf, 2001) draws from scholarship on film narratology (Bordwell, 1985; Branigan, 1992; Cameron, 2008; Chatman, 1978; Verstraten, 2009). A review of the writing on game narrative shows that the central conundrum of linear as opposed to interactive narrative has occupied a great deal of debate in game studies (Harrigan & Wardrip-Fruin, 2009, Jenkins, 2004, Murray, 1997). Issues of agency, freedom, and control, play a significant part in this analysis while Jenkins's concept of game design as narrative architecture (Jenkins, 2004) provides a key framework for analysing game narrative.

Scholarship on Adaptation Theory

Existing scholarship in adaptation theory (Andrew, 1984; Bluestone, 1957; Cartmell & Whelehan, 1999, 2010; Horton & McDougal, 1998; Leitch, 2007; McFarlane, 1996; Sanders, 2006; Stam & Raengo, 2005; Wagner, 1975) drives the conceptual framework for considering textual adaptation. Theoretical underpinnings of the approach to adaptation also draw from the work of narratologist Gerard Genette (Genette, 1980, 1988). Genette conceptualises the relationship between texts in his theory of transtextuality.

A wide range of adaptation strategies can result in a spectrum of fidelity to the hypotext (the source text), from a high level of fidelity, to an aberration of the original property (Branigan, 1984; Hutcheon, 2006; McFarlane, 1996; Sanders, 2006; Stam & Raengo, 2005). The ways in which these strategies are employed contribute to determining the particular textual approach to film-to-game adaptation.

Scholarship on Transmediality

Jenkins (2007) outlines what he sees as the determinable elements of transmedia storytelling, beginning with a foundational definition: "Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated

entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story" (Jenkins, 2007). The phrase transmedia storytelling (and its variations) is also repurposed for different groups, audiences, and contexts (See Aarseth, 2006; Aldred, 2012a; Davidson, 2010a; Dena, 2009; Elkington, 2005; Giovagnoli, 2011; Long, 2007; Rose, 2011).

Jenkins (2007) isolates a number of factors that determine transmedia form, observing the narrative's tendency to expand outwards to encompass:

> Complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories… The extension may provide insight into the characters and their motivations… may flesh out aspects of the fictional world… or may bridge between events depicted in a series of sequels… Ideally, each individual episode must be accessible on its own terms even as it makes a unique contribution to the narrative system as a whole. (n.p.)

Wolf (2012b) contributes significant formal properties of transmedia storytelling in his extensive work on the concept of world-building: here, his processes of transmedial growth and internarrative theory detailing various sequence elements lend theoretical purpose to the thesis.

Scholarship on Film-to-Game Adaptation

A majority of existing studies of film-to-game adaptation are in the form of case studies of individual games (Atkins, 2005a, 2005b; Brookey & Booth, 2006; Burill, 2002; Carr, Campbell, & Ellwood, 2006; Crogan, 2004; Fernández-Vara, 2016; Krzywinska, 2003; Newman & Simons, 2011; Thompson, 2007; Wallin, 2007). One of the most comprehensive discussions of film-to-game adaptation is Stefan Hall's doctoral dissertation (2011) in which he charts the history of film-licensed games surveying hundreds of instances throughout game history. A detailed investigation of early licensed games appears in the first entry of the MIT Press "Platform Studies" series on the Atari VCS (Montfort & Bogost, 2009). Here, a case study of the first game based on

a *Star Wars* film, the Atari 2600 game, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (1982),[2] is contextualised by examining one of the earliest instances of licensing in the games industry. Aldred (2012a) has also dealt with early licensed games in relation to the inherent abstraction of game aesthetics of the period.

Elkington (2005, 2009) has taken into account numerous practical considerations in his work on film-license game development, reflecting on the "self-defeating" nature of the project. Elkington's (2012) entry on adaptation distils his perspective on licensed games while considering film-to-game adaptations alongside other permutations such as game-to-film.

Recently, three book-length studies devoted to the connections between Hollywood and videogames have appeared (Blanchet, 2010; Brookey, 2010; Russell, 2012). While these works take an historical approach imbedded in political economy theory to the topic, Brookey (2010) also conducts a detailed investigation into a small range of licensed games to demonstrate various ideas about incorporation, interactivity, and authorship.

The thesis draws on various strands of scholarship in addition to adaptation theory discussed above, including film aesthetics (Bordwell, 2008; Bordwell & Thompson, 2013; Clayton & Klevan, 2011; King, 2000; McClean, 2007), game aesthetics (Aarseth et al., 2003; Atkins, 2003; Collins, 2008; Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2008; Jenkins & Squire, 2003; Jones, 2008; Juul, 2005; Myers, 2010; Nitsche, 2009; Tavinor, 2009; von Borries et al., 2007; Wolf, 2001), film narratology (Bordwell, 1985; Branigan, 1992; Cameron, 2008; Chatman, 1978; Verstraten, 2009), and game narratology (Aarseth, 1997; Crawford, 2005; Harrigan & Wardrip-Fruin, 2009; Jenkins, 2004; Juul, 2001; Murray, 1997; Wardrip-Fruin & Harrigan, 2004).

The intersection of games and cinema has been given a somewhat more developed focus by games scholars (Howells, 2002; King & Krzywinska, 2002a, 2002b, 2006a; Ndalianis, 1991, 2003) and it is this work that provides the thesis with a core theoretical dynamic.

---

[2] An unlicensed version of this game is Jeff Minter's beloved *Attack of the Mutant Camels* (Llamasoft, 1983).

In light of the existing scholarship, the primary motivator of this research is the need for a sustained investigation into the combination of theoretical, industrial, and cultural aspects of movie-licensed games, as it is this *combination* of perspectives that is lacking. This project has designed a system to meet these needs, which is the construction of general models of film-to-game adaptation to house case studies that demonstrate particular model permutations via analysis of textual, contextual, and paratextual factors. These factors can be viewed as a systematic investigation of narrative form, world-building and interactivation, whilst also taking into account the intentions of developers and industrial complications.

Research Questions

1. What is the locus of film-to-game adaptation in game industry and culture?

2. Why do film-to-game adaptations have a stigma of badness?

3. What forms do film-to-game adaptations take?

4. What can be learned from analysing examples of intrinsically excellent film-to-game adaptations?

Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes three contributions to the existing knowledge. Firstly, it integrates and applies adaptation and transmedia theory, particularly internarrative theory, to movie-licensed games to create a series of film-to-game adaptation models. Secondly, it creates a framework of analysis using a combination of textual, contextual, and paratextual investigation to open up understanding of the various dimensions of the phenomena. Thirdly, the analyses of the case studies themselves provide specific insights into the process of film-to-game adaptation.

Film-To-Game Adaptation Models

Three models of film-to-game adaptation are proposed which provide a system to understand film-to-game adaptation: The Reflection Model, the Intersection Model, and the Extension Model.

The Reflection Model may be seen within the scope of traditional adaptation studies, and the Intersection Model and Extension Model relate to transmedial factors drawing upon Wolf's (2012b) conception of "transmedial growth," where "another medium is used to present new canonical material of a world, expanding the world and what we know about it" (p. 245).

Two further models are discussed in the thesis, though not articulated in detail. A fourth model of adaptation exists, which is referred to as the Extrapolation Model. This model is applied to games that relate to the source film property in a very limited and tangential fashion, lacking an acknowledged interconnectivity to the established timeline of a series. Games that exhibit characteristics of the Extrapolation Model are beyond the core scope of this thesis, and are therefore not represented in case study analysis, however they do bear discussion and are subsequently considered in Chapter 4. A fifth model discussed in the thesis's concluding chapter is referred to as the Amalgamation Model. This model amalgamates characters and environments from multiple media properties.

The following questions are significant in isolating characteristics affecting adaptation in which each construct exhibits negotiated positions and requires problematisation. What is the essence of the work? To what extent do atmosphere, ambience, tone, texture, and milieu play a role in adaptation? How do issues of fidelity and consistency influence the adaptation model? How does the transformation of genre affect meaning? Finally, how does the concept of agency, described as "the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices" and "the thrill of exerting power over enticing and plastic materials" (Murray, 1997, p. 126), contribute to the adaptation?

Each chapter pertaining to the individual models contains a section that articulates elements of differentiation among the chosen case studies, and the ways in which they contribute to the parameters of the model. Individual case studies for each model vary in terms of development account, parartextual status, tonal, structural, and ludic qualities.

Model 1: Reflection

Figure 1. Reflection Model

In the Reflection Model (Figure 1), the game hypertext represents the film hypotext in the most direct manner possible. This model is associated with Wolf's (2012b) term "transmedial adaptation" which describes a mode in which "a story existing in one medium is adapted for presentation in another medium, but without adding any new canonical material to a world" (p. 245). The squares in the figure refer to events presented in the source film, while circles within the squares denote instances of interactivation of film sequences in the videogame adaptation.[3]

Case studies used to demonstrate the Reflection Model are *GoldenEye 007* (Nintendo, 1997) and *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* (LucasArts, 2006). Games adapted using the Reflection Model involve the player playing through the major events of the film in the order in which they are originally presented. For instance, whilst *LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga* (LucasArts, 2007) faithfully presents the narrative events of the hypotexts, it is by virtue of its ironic tone, a parodic reflection. Other examples that

[3] Note that the colours of the adaptation model figures are simply to differentiate the three models from each other.

fall within the Reflection Model include *Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie* (Ubisoft, 2005),[4] *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (EA, 2002), and *X-Men Origins: Wolverine (Uncaged Edition)* (Activision, 2009).

Model 2: Intersection

Figure 2. Intersection Model

The Intersection Model (Figure 2) involves a degree of divergence from the hypotext's narrative to the point of constructing a concurrent plot line, or at the least a series of intersection points with the source narrative. In the Intersection Model figure, while certain film sequences may be interactivated as in the Reflection Model (circles within squares), the circles without squares denote game sequences not found in the source film taking place between existing film sequences.

The point-and-click adventure game *Blade Runner* (Virgin, 1997) is illustrative of this model. In *Blade Runner*, while the playable character exhibits similar traits of the central character of the film, the player's avatar is not the same character. Rather, a newly invented character embarks on a parallel narrative in the same time frame and location to that of the hypotext. Notable Intersection Model adaptations include *Enter the Matrix* (Atari, 2003), *The Godfather: The Game* (EA, 2006), and *Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Conspiracy* (Sierra, 2008).

[4] Hereafter known as *PJKK*.

Model 3: Extension

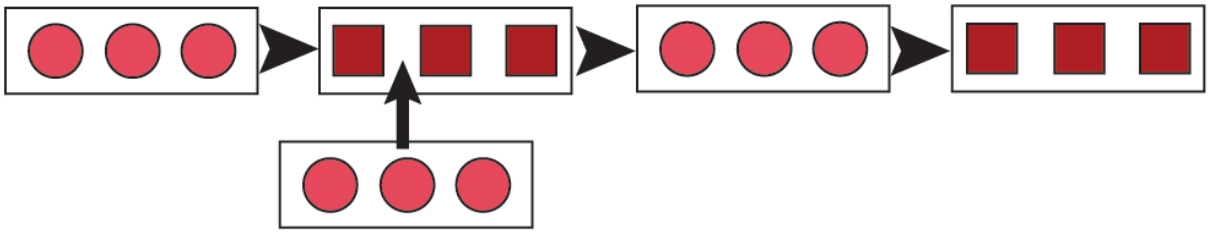

Figure 3. Extension Model

An Extension Model game may utilise several formal elements from the film hypotext, but acts as a sequence element within a series. Figure 3 shows a series of discrete films (squares within a rectangle) and games (circles within a rectangle). Here a game may precede a film (the set of circles on the left), follow a film (the set of circles on the right), or exist between events of a source film (the set of circles in the middle below). The events of these games may be closely temporally related to the events depicted in the hypotext. For example, the first-person shooter (FPS) stealth action title *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* (Vivendi, 2004) is regarded as a prequel to *Pitch Black* (Twohy, 2000), while *Stranglehold* (Midway, 2007) incorporates many stylistic tropes of director John Woo in a sequel to *Hard Boiled* (Woo, 1992). Further examples of the Extension Model include *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* (LucasArts, 1992), *Scarface: The World is Yours* (Vivendi, 2006), *Ghostbusters: The Video Game* (Vivendi, 2009), and *James Cameron's Avatar: The Game* (Ubisoft, 2009). The Extension Model includes games that are set in the universe of the film franchise, though they may be set in a far future, a distant past, as is the case of *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* (LucasArts, 2003),[5] or an unspecified fictional time period acting as a stand-alone entry in a series, as in the case of *Mad Max* (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015). The Extension Model case studies examined in this

[5] Hereafter referred to as *KotOR*.

thesis are *The Thing* (Vivendi Universal, 2002), *The Warriors* (Rockstar, 2005), and *Alien: Isolation* (Sega, 2014).

Preview

In support of the proposition that games are inherently problematic as a storytelling medium, Juul (2001) uses one of the earliest games based on the most financially successful of movie licenses, *Star Wars* (Atari, 1983), as a central example:

> *Star Wars* the game cannot be said to contain a narrative that can be recognised from *Star Wars* the movie: Most characters from the movie are missing, and the few events that are included in the game have become simulations where the player can either win or fail. (n.p.)

Here Juul considers the 1983 *Star Wars* game to employ a rather antiquated mode of adaptation, Jenkins (2004) however, takes a more holistic perspective of the game's position within a complex system of meaning, remarking that:

> We inhabit a world of transmedia story-telling, one which depends less on each individual work being self-sufficient than on each work contributing to a larger narrative economy. The *Star Wars* game may not simply retell the story of *Star Wars*, but it doesn't have to in order to enrich or expand our experience of the *Star Wars* saga. We already know the story before we even buy the game and would be frustrated if all it offered us was a regurgitation of the original film experience. Rather, the *Star Wars* game exists in dialogue with the films, conveying new narrative experiences through its creative manipulation of environmental details. One can imagine games taking their place within a larger narrative system with story information communicated through books, film, television, comics, and other media, each doing what it does best, each a relatively autonomous experience, but the richest understanding of the story world coming to those who follow the narrative across the various channels. In such a system, what games do best will almost certainly center around their ability to give concrete shape to our

> memories and imaginings of the storyworld, creating an immersive environment we can wander through and interact with. (p. 124)

Part of the disagreement regarding the game adaptation of *Star Wars* revolves around differences in conceptions of narrative that are discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Juul himself (2005) points this out (p. 157) as an example of isolating different meanings of narrative. This research draws from existing scholarship on adaptation while avoiding the rigid and restrictive application employed by Juul, and incorporating Jenkins's concepts of environmental storytelling and transmedia storytelling to be able to capture the particular resonances existing in film-to-game adaptations.

The thesis is structured in three major parts: in the first part, analytical methods and theory, addresses key characteristics of game form and ways in which films and games intersect (Chapter 1), adaptation theory, transmediality and the interconnections between this concept and adaptation (Chapter 2). The second part introduces key contexts and issues; namely, industrial and historical contexts (Chapter 3), the notion of the movie-licensed game as "bad object" (Chapter 4), and the framework of case study analysis (Chapter 5). The third and final section presents each of the adaptation models via analyses of a series of case studies on the Reflection Model (Chapter 6), the Intersection Model (Chapter 7), the Extension Model (Chapter 8), and a comparative discussion of the models (Chapter 9). The thesis concludes with an assessment of the registers of analysis used in the research and a consideration of recent trends in large-scale entertainment to create multi-film interconnecting and amalgamated entertainment franchises (Balio, 2013; Elberse, 2013).

The significant contribution of this thesis is the formulation of a framework to study film-to-game adaptation that incorporates adaptation and transmedia theory, and combines it with industrial, critical, player and franchise contexts leading to three explanatory models demonstrated by a series of case study analyses.

Chapter 1.

Game Form

In breaking down the process of film-to-game adaptation, it is essential to understand the textual qualities of the two media in order to consider the process of moving from one form to the other. This chapter establishes the formal properties of film and game aesthetics, highlighting ways in which films and games intersect formally, and thus allowing for considerations of similarity and difference between the media.

When examining the nature of film and videogame form, it is apparent that there are close affinities between both media. Both are screen-based, which dictates a number of crossover techniques in visual language and technical processes. The essential commonality found at the core of both art forms is the image. With cinema, we see that the photographic image is the building block of the form, as computer animation is in videogames. In addition to this mutual use of image, both are time-based art forms, as the passage and manipulation of time is a fundamental factor to their existence. At the broadest level, it can be seen that both media are comprised of images and sounds that are juxtaposed in space and time.

The question of film aesthetics has been essayed since the time of Eisenstein (Bordwell, 2005) in his theories of montage and audio-visual synthesis. The formal properties of film can be considered to be relatively stable concepts within film studies; however, definitional categories of videogame aesthetics are far more contested. Nevertheless, there are understandably clear crossovers between the media, and the cornerstone of scholarship on these intersections between film and games is an essay by King and Krzywinska (2002a),[6] discussing cut-scenes, point-of-view, digital animation, and narrative.

[6] Reworked and expanded into the introduction to their seminal book on the subject *ScreenPlay: Cinema / Videogames / Interfaces* (2002b).

One key formal dimension games do not share with film is the concept of interactivity, which is crucial in the flow of film-to-game adaptation. Espen Aarseth (1997) calls this "ergotic," referring to the necessity that "nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text" (p. 1). In addition to this disparity, Janet Murray's (1997) aspects of interactive media highlight the differences between the two art forms. Murray argues that interactive media consists of four aspects: participatory, encyclopedic, procedural, and spatial (pp. 71–90). To consider the notion of interactivity from another perspective, Brown (2012) deals with the shared process of suspension of disbelief articulating how players must reconcile interactive factors with a game's fiction.

When considering the differences between various art forms, it is useful to consider Noël Carroll's (1985) idea of "medium specificity" regarding media and their particular textual conditions: "each art form, in virtue of its medium, has its own exclusive domain of development" (p. 5). He goes on to explain:

> This domain is determined by the nature of the medium through which the objects of a given art form are composed. Often the idea of "the nature of the medium" is thought of in terms of the physical structure of the medium. The medium specificity thesis can be construed as saying that each art form should pursue those effects that, in virtue of its medium, it alone… can achieve. (p. 6)

Carroll's medium specificity thesis contributes to this study by considering the significance of the differing expressive qualities each medium affords, so that videogame textual characteristics such as world-building and interactivation are foregrounded in the case study analyses.

The scope of the discussion in this chapter is limited to formal aspects of both media in an effort to set the agenda for later chapters dealing with factors that are textually remediated when film-to-game adaptation takes place.

Game Form

Academic game studies is still in its relative infancy and as such, scholars are still negotiating the terminology, categories, and definitions of formal game features, which overlap and intersect in existing literature.[7] This section will aim to outline some major theories and investigate key ideas from each, however it is important to note that the study will focus only on concepts that are useful to the textual analysis of the case studies in Chapters 6–8.

When looking at early literature, the most comprehensive formal articulation of videogame form comes from authors who have approached games from an aesthetic perspective, such as Poole (2000) and Wolf (2001), while Jesper Juul's games studies scholarship from the early 2000s (2001, 2004) privileged the ludological in his work on the relationship between fiction and game rules.

Wolf (2001, 2007) grapples with the definition of what exactly constitutes a videogame, including references to such elements as conflict, rules, player ability, some kind of valued outcome and the identity of the computer as player. He isolates four major formal aspects of videogames: space, time, narrative, and genre (2001). Juul expands upon Wolf's useful elements in *Half-Real* (2005), explaining the tensions that exist between the narratological and the ludological, privileging the latter features. These tensions have been seen as embodiments of particular academic camps (Murray, 2005).[8]

Other contributions in this space include the formalist analysis of Aarseth (2000) and Aarseth et al. (2003) who employ a multi-dimensional typology articulating a coherent set of formal factors; King and Krzywinska (2006a), as well as Myers (2010). In more recent times, both Lankoski and Bjork (2015a) and most significantly, Fernández-Vara (2015) have presented frameworks for the analysis of game form, while the

[7] An example of this is the common term "game aesthetics," which is used by different scholars in different ways. Some sources consider this term to refer to the geography and representation of game spaces and characters (such as Von Borries et al (2007). Engenfeltd-Nielsen et al (2013) have a far more expansive view of the term, considering game aesthetics as akin to wider game form as it incorporates not only audiovisual representation but also rules and game mechanics.

[8] Namely: "game essentialism" and "computer game formalism" according to Murray (2005).

philosophical import of game aesthetics has been tackled by scholars such as Tavinor (2009) and Bateman (2011).

As a way to organise these varying viewpoints, I suggest that game form can be seen to comprise four main features: space, time, rules and narrative. While all games exhibit the first three features, narrative is connected only to games exhibiting narrative form, which is a key concern of the movie-licensed game, and a prime consideration in all case studies.

Space

Employing Engenfeltd-Nielsen et al (2008, 2013), space can be considered in terms of two factors: geography and representation.

Geography

The physical environment in which a game takes place is referred to as a "game space." In the past, these game spaces have been understood in terms of sports fields and game boards in traditional board games. In videogames, the "physical" location or setting can be referred to as the game's geography,[9] and one of the central considerations here is level design. This formal factor incorporates understanding of real world architecture as well as larger environmental design that can extend to physical typography and even entire planet building.

Representation

Representation refers to the manner in which spaces[10] and objects are rendered as images and sounds in a videogame; and may also be considered in terms of art style. The overriding representational system discussed in relation to videogames is that of realism (King & Krzywinska, 2006a). Going beyond realism as a representational style, Sondergaard (2006) considers "cartoony" game art by promulgating three types of realism: enhanced realism, (realistic details, increased contrast and saturation)

[9] It is no wonder that many game designers of large-scale games are considered world-builders.
[10] Wolf (1997) provides a taxonomy of both on screen and off-screen space in videogames.

simplified realism (fewer and distortedly large details, colour ranges simplified to clichés), and distorted realism (violent distortion of shapes and internal proportions).[11]

Alternatively, Järvinen (2002) has identified three distinct graphical styles that have persisted throughout videogame history: first is "photorealism,"[12] a term used to "refer to photographic likeness with reality… photo realism has long traditions in computer graphics, as photorealism is largely about simulation, and the use of computer graphics for scientific purposes has largely consisted of simulating different events" (p. 121). Here he cites *Myst* (Broderbund, 1993). The second distinct style is "caricaturism," which is about simplifying characteristic features and "non-photographic" simulation. Here he cites such games as *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (Nintendo, 1998), *Parappa the Rapper* (Sony, 1997), and *Jet Set Radio* (Sega, 2000). The third distinct style is "abstractionism": "abstractionism does not simulate characters or easily recognisable places," rather, it refers to "pure forms" (p. 123). Järvinen cites *Tetris* (Various, 1984) and *Rez* (Sega, 2001) as indicative of this style, with a more recent example being *PixelJunk Eden* (Q-Games, 2008).[13] It should also be noted that written text may also represent space in the case of text adventure games for instance.

Time

Various scholars have investigated the question of how time operates in relation to videogame storytelling. For instance, Zagal & Mateas (2007) discuss four temporal frames: real-world time, game-world time, coordination time, and fictive time. Chief

[11] Sondergaard draws on McCloud's (1994) picture plane in his codification of game representation.

[12] A subcategory of photorealism is televisualism, commonly seen in sports simulations and some racing games, where broadcast television stylistics are mimicked. The second subcategory of photorealism is "illusionism," where photorealism is used for "fantastic and imaginary purposes" (p. 122), and here Järvinen cites the more recent entries in the *Final Fantasy* series.

[13] Where most writers consider game aesthetics to refer to geography and representation, (including videogame graphics and animation), Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al (2013) consider not only these generally accepted factors of geography and representation; they also include the number of players and rules. Namely, they see the primary aesthetics of games to be a combination of these aforementioned elements. Scholars such as Mayra (2010) consider aesthetics to be constructed in different terms that he refers to as the *core* and the *shell* – the core relating to gameplay (and therefore rules) and the shell referring to representational elements. Even though these three elements are considered the aspects of game aesthetics by Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al (2013), the authors claim that these three elements could indeed be independent of one another (p. 117). They give the example that "one set of rules, for example, could be attached to a variety of game representations (we could have a game of star wars [sic] chess – which in fact we do). But, as we shall see, the choices regarding one of these elements tend in practice to shape the others" (p. 117).

among scholars contributing to an understanding of game time is Jesper Juul. In *Half-Real* (2005), which expands on his earlier (2004) deliberation of the phenomenon by considering it within his discussion of fiction and imagined worlds, he defines the terms "game time," "play time," and "fictional time." Game time is made up of play time, which "denotes the time span taken to play a game," and fictional time,[14] "the time of the events in the game world" (p. 142).[15]

The introduction of cut-scenes (Tong & Tan, 2002) into a game complicate temporality further, as Juul explains:

> Cut-scenes depict events in fictional time (in the game world). Cut-scenes are not a parallel time or an extra level, but a different way of projecting the fictional time. They do not by themselves modify the game state—this is why they can usually be skipped, and why the user usually cannot do anything within a cut-scene. While play time is projected to fictional time in interactive sequences, cut-scenes disconnect play time from fictional time. (pp. 145–147)

Juul claims that "notwithstanding inspirations from cinema, time in games is almost always chronological" (p. 147), though "using cut-scenes or in-game artefacts, it is possible to describe events that led to the current fictional time" (p. 148) (see Figure 4). The approach of using in-game artefacts to distribute narrative information is referred to as embedded storytelling by Jenkins (2004).

[14] In an earlier publication (Juul, 2004), he refers to this as "event time."

[15] Juul (2005) states "the link between play time and fictional time can be described as 'projection.' Projection means that the player's time and actions are projected onto the game world where they take on a fictional meaning" (p. 143). Due to the nature of play activity "action games tend to have a 1:1 ratio projection of the play time to the fictional time" (p. 143).

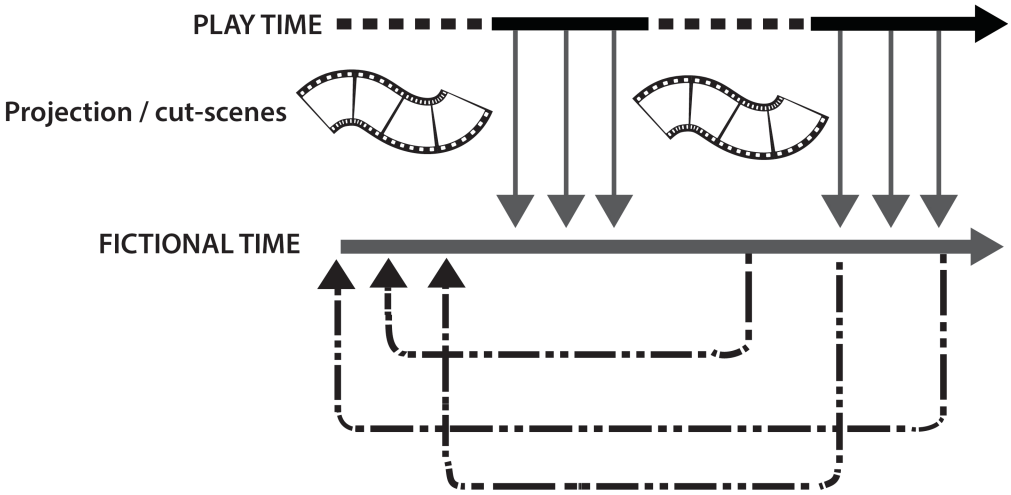

Figure 4. Juul's play time vs fictional time and cut-scenes

Rules

Salen and Zimmerman (2004) consider three rule types: operational rules, (the rules of the game), constitutive rules (the code / mathematical basis of games) and implicit rules—these are the rules that players take for granted when entering the *magic circle* (per Huizinga, 1949) or play space. It is via rules that players interact with the game system. Tavinor (2014a) claims that "it is the interactivity of video games that explains the distinctive modes of graphical time-based, and narrative art found in video games" (p. 63). Further, "because of the impact of player choice on the *ontology* of video games as an art form, interactivity is a central concept in understanding the distinctive modes of artistic creation, expression, performance, and interpretation that attend their art" (p. 63).

Rules comprise the ludological basis of any given game, and a game's rules are operationalized via game mechanics. A rudimentary explanation of game mechanics can be understood as designed player affordances, or "what the player can do"—for example the player can run, jump, pick up a weapon, and shoot (Adams & Rollings, 2007). As Smith argues (2006), these affordances and the implicit and explicit goals of a game contribute to player behaviour. It is imperative to be acutely sensitive to the ludological dimensions in film-to-game adaptation, since ludological elements do not exist in the source medium, only the adaptation. When a film is adapted into a

videogame, *how* it becomes a game in the ludological sense is a central question for film-to-game adaptation. This thesis explicitly connects rules and mechanics with game genre, discussed later in this chapter.

Narrative

Game narrative form has been a major topic of debate since the establishment of critical game studies. Some of the earliest sustained analyses of games dealt with concepts of narration (Aarseth, 1997; Murray, 1997) and have continued at a steady pace.[16] Game scholar Jesper Juul has been a vocal proponent of, as he states, "A Clash Between Games and Narrative."[17] Juul (2001) argues that there is an inherent difference in the way literature and cinema deal with story time as opposed to videogames. Juul proposes that while films "carry a basic sense that even though the viewer is watching the movie, now… the events told are *not* happening *now*" (Juul in Frome, 2006, p. 222), and to support this, he cites David Bordwell: "Bordwell writes, there is the sense that the text before us, the play or the film, is the performance of a *prior* story" (p. 222). In essence, Juul considers videogames to deal with narrative in the *present* in a way film and literature cannot. However, Frome states that Juul's reference to Bordwell is problematic in that this particular quotation relates to a viewpoint of Sergei Eisenstein, not Bordwell's idea regarding storytelling temporality (Frome, p. 32). In this sense, Juul's substantiation is founded on an incorrect framework. Frome further interrogates Juul's position by stating that audiences experience a film "as a present and ongoing sequence of events, not as something that has occurred in the past, even if we consciously realise that the film has a determined ending as we watch it" (p. 32).

Narrative Agency

There are various ways to understand narrative agency, and this thesis will attempt to provide a truncated view. Agency is a multivalent term in game studies: it operates at the nexus of game design and play, addressing core concerns of player involvement, in addition to associated conditions of input, control, freedom, and choice. Murray (1997) defines agency as "the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of

[16] For further reading on narration in game scholarship see: Arsenault (2006), Atkins (2003), Carr, Buckingham, Burn & Schott (2006), Harrigan and Wardrip-Fruin (2009), Juul (2001), King and Krzywinska (2006b), Montfort (2007), Tavinor (2009, 2014b), and Wolf (2001).

[17] This is the title of his master's dissertation.

our decisions and choices" (p. 16), while Bateman (2007) defines the term as "the capacity for a player to effect meaningful changes in a game world or at least the illusion that the player has this capacity" (p. 63). Another way to understand this might be the choices a player makes and how this affects the result of their gameplay.

Many critics have differing ideas when considering the nature of agency. Kinder (2002) draws upon Murray and Manovich in her discussion of the equivocations between cinema and videogames, going on to contrast Murray's ideas of narrative agency with Manovich's conception of database structures in interactive narrative. Wardrip-Fruin et al. (2009) consider it within the framework of a computational model. Zakowski (2014) extends Bordwell's conceptualisation of narrative (2008) considering alternate plotlines in branching videogame narrative, particularly in the case of the *Mass Effect* series (EA, 2007–2012). Zakowski discusses the concept of "possible worlds" (PWs), which are potential branches of the story due to particular decision-making by the player. There can only be one PW per playthrough: "the player only actualizes one of these hypothetical time lines (or PWs) in one playthrough, while the others remain non-activated possibilities" (Zakowski, 2014, p. 72).

The antithesis of this idea of what eventuates with player choices is dealt with by Ryan (2006), who considers the existence of all the choices or routes not taken by the player to be a "complex network of events and states that never take place, such as possibilities contemplated by the characters and suppressed plotlines contemplated by the reader" (Ryan in Zakowski, 2014, p. 59). Zakowski goes on to cite Herman's (2002) term "fuzzy temporality," which refers to a type of "temporal indeterminacy," specifically: "temporal sequencing that is strategically inexact, making it difficult or even impossible to assign narrated events a fixed or even fixable position along a timeline" (Herman in Zakowski, p. 73). Zakowski goes on to explain Herman's argument that, "in this sense, the order of the narrative actions is under- or even undetermined. As a consequence, the narrative is delinearized, enabling multiple possible sequences of events, actions, and choices" (Zakowski, p. 73).

Game Design as Narrative Architecture

Jenkins's influential essay "Game Design as Narrative Architecture" (2004) provides one of the most useful frameworks to consider game narrative. His thesis has its basis in

what he calls "environmental storytelling." Jenkins explains the connection between game design and spatial design by stating:

> Game designers don't simply tell stories; they design worlds and sculpt spaces. It is no accident, for example, that game design documents have historically been more interested in issues of level design than on plotting or character motivation. A prehistory of video and computer games might take us through the evolution of paper mazes or board games, both preoccupied with the design of spaces, even where they also provided some narrative context. (p. 121)

In this essay Jenkins introduces four ways in which games can tell spatial stories:

> Environmental storytelling creates the preconditions for an immersive narrative experience in at least one of four ways: spatial stories can evoke pre-existing narrative associations; they can provide a staging ground where narrative events are enacted; they may embed narrative information within their *mise-en-scène*; or they provide resources for emergent narratives. (p. 123)

"Evoked narrative" is found when another work of fiction's diegetic world is transferred to videogames, as with the planet of Pandora from *Avatar* (Cameron, 2009) becoming the setting for *James Cameron's Avatar: The Game*. This is of course of central concern in the process of film-to-game adaptation. "Enacted narrative" appears where "the organization of the plot becomes a matter of designing the geography of imaginary worlds, so that obstacles thwart and affordances facilitate the protagonist's forward movement towards resolution," (p. 124–125) thereby emphasizing spatial exploration. Due to the often-episodic nature of spatial storytelling, Jenkins suggests that the localised incidents that occur in these stories be referred to as "micronarratives" (p. 125). Connected to this he also posits the term "memorable moments" to describe sequences "within a work that produce a profound emotional impact" (p. 125). Jenkins says that enacting stories operates in two broad ways—games either "enable players to perform or witness narrative events" (p. 124).

Characteristics of "embedded narrative" occur when "the gamespace becomes a memory palace whose contents must be deciphered as the player tries to reconstruct the

plot" (p. 129). This is the case with many adventure games, so it's no surprise that many of these games centre on a detective narrative (such as the 1992 game *Blade Runner*). The emotional import of action games like *The Last of Us* (SCE, 2013) is highly dependent upon the embedded storytelling within the game's *mise-en-scène*. In every new environment in *The Last of Us*, the player asks, "what happened here?" The game responds to this question, sometimes implicitly, through subtle environmental design, and at other times, more explicitly, through letters or audio-recordings. Jenkins posits that "emergent narrative" refers to the way in which "gamespaces are designed to be rich with narrative potential, enabling the story-constructing activity of players" (p. 129), exemplified by the player's authorship in a simulation game like *Dune II: The Battle for Arrakis* (Virgin Interactive, 1992) or a sandbox game like *The Sims* (EA, 2000).

As can be seen, Jenkins's conception of narrative architecture (2004) is highly dependent on understanding how game spaces communicate narrative information. Ndalianis's work provides a consistency to Jenkins's theoretical approach on space and movement in horror games (1991, 2003), as well as her contribution of explicating how the neo-baroque functions in media such as games (2004). The discussion about environmental storytelling reminds us that environments in a game's diegesis are constructed with an underlying purpose, which may function as a means of "shaping the game play or contributing to the mood and atmosphere or encouraging performance, playfulness, competition, or collaboration" (Jenkins & Squire, 2003) which is elaborated by the importance of a story's ability to convey organized spatial features. For instance, in a fighting game such as *X-Men Origins: Wolverine (Uncaged Edition)*, "players learn to scan their environments for competitive advantages" (Jenkins & Squire, 2003).

Genre

An understanding of the foundations of genre (Frow, 2006) and isolating genre specificities from both film (Altman, 1999; Friedman et al, 2014; Moine, 2008; Neale, 2000; Thomas, 2000; Schatz, 1981) and games (Aarseth, 2004; Apperley, 2006; Clearwater, 2011; King & Krzywinska, 2006b; Rouse, 2009; Wolf, 2001; Wolf & Perron, 2014) contributes to a sensitivity to how each medium arranges material

according to accepted codes and conventions in an attempt to identify issues of compatibility and transference.

One method of highlighting points of separation between film and games is to consider the various ways in which each media has treated the concept of genre. Apperley (2006) clearly investigates the issues related to the differences between film and game genres. Though certain genre designations exist that rely on visual / dramatic codes and conventions, most scholars' systems are organised via action types rather than thematic elements. Mayra's (2008) concept of a game's "shell" and "core" comes into play here. Film genres may be thought of as emanating from "shell" elements, while most scholars like Atkins (2003; Wolf, 2001) consider "core" elements as the basis of generic organisation.

Game genre in this instance is understood to be characterised around particular challenges through gameplay mechanics, rather than setting, subject matter, theme, or purpose (Adams & Rollings, 2007). Adams and Rollings (2007) consider game genres from a practical game design perspective, isolating distinctive features and core mechanics in an effort to sensitise potential game developers to key generic elements. While scholarship on game genre is under-theorised, contested, and relatively unstable compared with film genre theory, much can be gleaned from using this as a platform for analysis as can be seen in the doctoral dissertations that investigate game genres including Fernández-Vara's (2009) focus on adventure games and Pinchbeck (2009) on the FPS genre.[18]

This thesis argues that game mechanics are central to the conception of game genre. By identifying formal factors such as game mechanics as the primary defining criteria of most genre designations, one privileges the ludological dimension of games above such criteria as subject matter, target audience or style as identified by Watson (2012) with

[18] Most commentators regard action as the videogame "ur-genre"—meaning the original. Arsenault (2014) considers it a "super-genre" in a recent collection by Wolf and Perron (2014) in which they devote separate chapters to action, adventure, role-playing, shooting, simulation, sports, and strategy games respectively. As a comparison, Watson (2012) identifies what he sees as key defining criteria for major film genres. These defining criteria are diverse in nature. Criteria such as subject matter, target audience, and style point towards the possibilities of considering film genres via categories that are highly disparate demonstrating the arbitrary nature of existing genre classification.

regard to film genre (p. 194) and therefore highlights the divergence of formal characteristics between films and games.

King and Krzywinska argue that games can be categorised on four levels, those being genre, platform, mode, and milieu (2002a, pp. 26–27). Later, they defined genre "in reference to different thematic, narrative and other types in media such as film and television—to refer to categories such as horror, science fiction, and fantasy, rather than game specific types such as first-person shooter or role-playing game" (King & Krzywinska, 2006b, p. 55).[19]

Apperley (2006) draws directly upon film genre scholars such as Altman in considering his critical approach to game genres. Apperley (2006) argues that privileging aspects such as visual aesthetic and narrative structure in game genre classification demonstrates "a failure to understand the medium" (p. 6) and that the application of dimensions of interactivity provide a more fruitful way of investigating game genre. Apperley describes the problem with conventional videogame genres thus: "rather than being a general description of style of ergotic interaction that takes place within the game, it is instead loose aesthetic clusters based around video games' aesthetic linkages to prior media forms" (p. 7). He goes on to state: "The established genres of video games, while being substantially different from literary or filmic genres, still emphasize representation over any notion of interactivity" (p. 7).

Wolf (2005) determines 42 interactive genres[20] for classifying videogames, including such obtuse categories as artificial life, diagnostic, and utility games. Apperley (2006)

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[19] Yet another approach is Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al.'s (2013) distillation of all permutations of games down into four genre types. Each of these four genre types is based on a game's criteria for success. The question they ask is "what does it take to succeed in the game?" (p. 47). Their genre system is dependent on goals and how the player achieves them. Their four genres are action games, (which require fast reflexes), adventure games (where the central criterion for success is a logic ability), strategy games (where the player must analyse interdependent variables), and finally what they refer to as process-orientated games (in which the criterion for success varies widely and is often non-existent). The process-orientated game "exists at the edges of this definition of a game. Instead of giving the player one or more goals, process-orientated games provide the player with a system to play with" (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al, 2013, p. 49). Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. (2013) consider simulation games as a sub-category of process-orientated games.

[20] In his discussion of classifying videogames into 42 interactive genres, Wolf (2005) isolates adaptation as a game genre of its own. The genre of adaptation includes "activities adapted from another medium or gaming activity, such as sports, table-top games, board games, card games, or games whose action closely follows a narrative from a work existing in another medium" (p. 195).

praises Wolf's (2001) articulation of 42 categories of game genres in capturing games' "dynamism and variety" (p. 7). Hence, Apperley argues for a multi-genre classification of games: "What is crucially important to video game genres is to be able to think of each individual game as belonging to several genres at once" (p. 19).

The academic investigation surrounding theories of game genre prompted Arsenault (2009) to establish an argument revolving around two problems—first, that game genre taxonomies have been organised using various criteria, creating a situation where "the very notion of genre is… a mess" (p. 2). Consequently, Arsenault argues that if we accept the genre model "we have to account for its transformations, adaptations and reinventions" (p. 2). Arsenault's intention here is to foreground the necessity to create a model of innovation.

It has been argued in various quarters (Arsenault, 2009; 2014) that in recent times commercial games considered as part of the action or action-adventure genre have tended towards genre hybridisation, especially the widespread implementation of mechanics associated with role playing games such as customisation and character progression.

Film and Game Intersection

At its most abstract essence, cinema as per Eisenstein (Bordwell, 2005) is a juxtaposition of image and sound existing in time. Like games it is clear that cinema is a combination of previous art forms leading to the assertion that film is a highly cannibalistic medium. When examining the medium with a view to categorise these melded forms we find photography, aspects from the theatre arts such as performance, costume and lighting, the narrative techniques of the novel, and lastly the introduction of sound, which weds music to image on the film soundtrack. It is the stylistic technique of editing that marks cinema's innovation.

This thesis follows Bordwell's conceptions of film form and style as historical poetics (Bordwell, 2008). When considering film in relation to previous art forms, Bordwell (2007b) argues that there are five dimensions that define the medium's nature: film as a

photographic art, film as a narrative art, film as a performing art, film as a pictorial art, and film as an audiovisual art. Film as a photographic art can be explained literally as movies being comprised of moving photographs, allowing filmmakers to photograph their immediate surrounds, resulting in a highly realistic portrayal of the tangible world. Film theorist André Bazin (1967) argued that the photographic nature of cinema distinguished it from all other arts, in the sense that cinema captured tangible movement, spatial reality, and portions of time as we would experience them in real life. When Bordwell considers film as a narrative art, he refers to the focus on the narrative commonly at the heart of most discussions of films, and that the categorisation of films into particular genres can often be guided by the archetypal characters and plot patterns present. Bordwell's idea of film as a performing art refers to the dramatic enactment of the stories being photographed, and the varying layers of depth, emotion, and affect that can only be created within this medium by humanistic performance. When viewing film as a pictorial art, Bordwell regards cinema's unique visual fluidity which is affected by camera movement, angle, shot size, and editing, allowing a visual creation unlike any other medium (except perhaps videogames). Film as an audio-visual art considers the way in which synthesis of spoken dialogue, sound effects, and music with the image results in a sensory experience unlike the isolated absorption of these techniques. Akin to Bordwell's schematisation of film as art, Wolf (2010) asserts that "video games can be considered as graphic art, as time based art, as narrative art, as interactive art" (Wolf in Tavinor, 2014a, p. 63).[21]

When considering the idea of cannibalisation and melding of art forms (a practice that can be seen in both film and videogame media) it is pertinent to regard the notion of "remediation," whereby new media refashions existing media. This term remediation is promulgated by Bolter and Grusin (2000), who go on to articulate what they consider to be the double logic of remediation— immediacy sand hypermediacy: "Our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally, it wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them" (p. 5). As part of their thesis, Bolter and Grusin analyse various media, some traditional, such as film and television, as well

[21] Rombes (2009) discusses factors germane to the nature of contemporary digital cinema, some of which cross-over into the realm of interactive media form and culture.

as new media, like the internet, digital photography and computer games.[22] Early games, on the other hand, such as *Tennis for Two* (Higinbotham, 1958) and *Spacewar!* (Russell, 1962) were designed as experiments in computational science and mathematics created on mainframe computers in an effort to explore the power of high-end computers (Ahl, 2008).[23] From this perspective, videogames can be seen as an extension of computational arts as argued by Bogost (2006).

It may be argued that cinema is the main art form from which videogames games draw and thus various techniques of film aesthetics have been co-opted by games. Methods borrowed from film to produce a particular atmosphere, mood, or dramatic tone are replicated in games (Frome, 2006; Frome & Smuts, 2004) as a matter of course with certain traditional cinematic narrative techniques employed to organise and structure gameplay (Bateman, 2007; Kinder, 2002; Lebowitz & Klug, 2011; McGann, 2003; Shelton, 2004). Further, tropes of the action film genre (Bordwell, 2007a; King, 2000, 2002; Lichtenfield, 2007; Purse, 2011) have been incorporated into game aesthetics (King & Krzywinska, 2006b).

The reverse scenario can be considered whereby film draws from videogame aesthetics. Bittanti (2001) writes of the "technoludic film"[24] whereby videogames are depicted in cinema. Bittanti's study assesses fifty-three videogame related films made between 1973–2001 and creates a four strand taxonomy of the technoludic film: a *commentary* technoludic film, which comments on videogames and reflects society's concerns about them (*Tron*, Lisberger, 1982; *The Last Starfighter*, Castle, 1984); a *quotation*

[22] Take for example radio and film, where both media share representational factors with one another. A radio documentary such as *Serial* (NPR, 2014) shares much with film documentaries, however a radio documentary is not simply a film documentary without images; adversely a film is not a radio documentary with images. Both forms deal with the notion of truth or actuality as defines a documentary, but meaning is created in different ways. The radio documentary may employ techniques common to the film documentary such as interview, actuality sound, sound effects, and voice-over—but radio documentary obviously has no images. Listening to a radio documentary is in some ways a more intimate experience akin to reading a novel due to the necessity of the audience to use the audio cues to create the world of the subject. The documentary filmmaker cannot escape images and the overwhelming power and solidity that images bring. Similarly, videogames share aesthetic and structural elements with film but both go about creating meaning in different ways. Like radio, videogames are a more intimate medium than film, but in this case due to an entirely other set of aesthetic qualities - the interactive agency properties designed within any given game.

[23] It is interesting to consider the origins of both media – film as a scientific tool for the documentation of anatomy, and videogames as an experimental offshoot within the discipline of computer science. The entertainment function of both media only developed subsequent to these origins.

[24] Hepburn (2010) extends this discussion.

technoludic film, which displays videogames in one or more scenes for illustrative purposes (*Soylent Green*, Fleischer, 1973; *D.A.R.Y.L.,* Wincer, 1985); an *adaptation* technoludic film, which is a film translation of an existing videogame (*Super Mario Bros.,* Jankel & Morton, 1993; *Mortal Kombat*, Anderson, 1995); and lastly, a *remediation* technoludic film, which embodies some features of videogames into the narrative (*Groundhog Day,* Ramis, 1993; *Being John Malkovich*, Jonze, 1999).[25] In a similar vein, Brooker (2009a) writes of the "videogame film." He distinguishes between a "videogame-style film" which integrates "game conventions while not adapting a specific game" (p. 123), citing Tony Scott's *Deja-Vu* (2006) and Alex Proyas's *I, Robot* (2004); and films that adopt a videogame narrational logic, citing *Run Lola Run* (Tykwer, 1998) and *Groundhog Day*.

Recent mainstream films such as *Oblivion* (Kosinski, 2013), and *Elysium* (Blomkamp, 2013) have been referred to as being "like a videogame." Valjalo (2013) claims that the visual iconography of videogames is strongly in effect: "*Oblivion*'s clinical habitats feel distinctly *Portal*, the weapons distinctly Bungee, and that Kosinski's back catalogue of films such as *Tron: Legacy* (Kosinski, 2010) and his *Gears of War* and *Halo* television commercials are heavily dependent on videogame visual style" (n.p.). Following Valjalo, Ditum (2014) discusses *Edge of Tomorrow* (Liman, 2014), where "the incorporation of elements which assumed familiarity with the structural conceits and conventions of games" are played out. Both *Source Code* (Jones, 2011) and *Edge of Tomorrow* incorporate the "priorities and consequences of playing a videogame," that is, the "iterative learn-and-reload of a videogame" (n.p.). In *Edge of Tomorrow* Tom Cruise plays the lead character in which according to Ditum (2014), "Cruise's attitude, his glib detachment from his mortality, makes it feel like a game" (n.p.). Ditum argues that "this glibness… defines *Edge of Tomorrow*'s unusually sophisticated relationship with games" in that the film "recognises the difference between death and failure in games, which are sometimes the same thing but not always—failure meaning the ability to complete an objective, and death on its own, meaning just the inconvenience of a restart" (n.p.).

[25] More recently, films such as *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* (Wright, 2010) and *Wreck-It Ralph* (Moore, 2012) continue the remediation and quotation strands of the technoludic film.

This crossover between media exists in the reverse direction in the recent tendency in film narrative scholarship referred to as "puzzle films" (Buckland, 2009), "mind-game" films (Elsaesser, 2009), and "modular narratives" (Cameron, 2008) in which a complex subjective narration unfolds. Here we see a kind of videogame logic at work in recent mainstream contemporary cinema. One example of this can be explained as a manipulation of cinematic narration so that the technique of repetition (in terms of the frequency of narrative presentation) is akin to the re-starting of a gameplay sequence following the "death" of the player's avatar.[26] Bittanti's remediation technoludic film connects not only with the puzzle film but also with more recent works like *Oblivion* and *Edge of Tomorrow.*

Formal Continuities

What are the continuities that exist between these two media forms? Screen media scholars Geoff King and Tania Krzywinska have together (2002a, 2002b, 2006a, 2006b) and Krzywinska separately (Brown & Krzywinska, 2009; Krzywinska, 2003) discussed issues of aesthetic connection on a number of occasions with reference to such factors as cut-scenes and digital animation.[27] They also articulate concepts relating to point of view and narrative subjectivity (2002a) that closely aligns the two media to a higher degree than other writers in the field. Howells's (2002) contribution to the debate focuses mainly on the role of the cut-scene as a central aesthetic continuity. King and Krzywinska (2006a) discuss factors associated with film studies that impact on digital games and formal analysis. They outline such factors as point-of-view*, mise-en-scène*, spectacle and sensation and the challenge of interactivity. This section foregrounds the formal features of cut-scenes and editing.

Games studies scholar Rune Klevjer (2014) defines cut-scenes thus:

> A cut-scene is a cinematic sequence that suspends regular gameplay in order to convey plot, characterization, and spectacle. In broad gameplay terms, cut-scenes contribute to structure and pacing in story-based single-player games. They

[26] We can refer once again to films such as *Source Code*, *Inception* (Nolan, 2010) and *Edge of Tomorrow* with regard to the use of this technique.
[27] See Aldred (2012b).

> typically function as rewards for the player, as markers of progress along the way, and as regular respites from the intensity of action. (p. 301)

King and Krzywinska (2006b) state that during cut-scenes players "usually perform a role closer to that of a detached observer than is the case in more active periods of gameplay" (p. 142). They outline the function of the cut-scene in mainly narrative terms:

> Cut-scenes tend to employ camera movement, shot-selection and framing similar to that used in the cinema. Many games use cut-scenes to establish the initial setting and background storyline. Opening cut-scenes frequently employ the same expository devices as cinema, using a combination of long shots, mid shots and close-ups to provide orientation for the player. Cut-scenes are also used at varying intervals throughout many games, to forward the storyline and to entice or reward players with sequences of spectacular action and / or dialogue. They may be used to provide clues or to establish enigmas that have a bearing on the narrative trajectory of the game. (pp. 142–143)

Carr et al. (2006) discuss cut-scenes in relation to their function within the action adventure genre:

> For some designers and game writers, cutscenes are functional (rather than merely decorative), because they re-establish continuity, plot and characterization—features that tend to become lost during the played levels. Associating cutscenes with narrative, and levels with gameplay is an oversimplification. However, it is true that traditionally in action adventure games levels are associated with play and interactivity, while cutscenes are equated with non-interactive storytelling. (pp. 157–158)

The presence of the cut-scene has been a staple of videogame design in various forms, especially since the fourth generation of game history, playing a key role during the early days of live-action video and Full-Motion Video (FMV) in the 1990s (Russell, 2012), indelibly connected to such games as the *Wing Commander* franchise (Origin Systems and EA, 1990–2007) (Majewski & Knight, 2017). Cut-scenes have been

employed extensively, albeit in a transformed state, in motion-captured games of the seventh and eighth generation such as *Heavy Rain* (SCE, 2010), *The Last of Us* and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (CD Projekt RED, 2015).

As has been mentioned, one of the defining characteristics of cinema as a medium is that of editing or montage. In videogames, temporality can be manipulated in various ways: it can be argued that the technique of "fast-travelling" (moving between locations instantaneously without actually having to take real time to traverse an environment) is an approximation of cinematic spatial editing. Bogost (2010) clearly articulates the argument that cinema is distinctly different to videogames, primarily with regard to spatial editing. He uses the example of *Heavy Rain*, a game that has been referred to as "highly cinematic" by many writers, in an effort to tease out how editing can be incorporated into videogames outside of cut-sequences:

> Generally, video games don't have cinematic editing. They can't, because continuity of action is essential to interactive media. In fact, that continuity is so important that most games (3D games, anyway) give the player direct control over the camera, allowing total manipulation of what is seen and from what vantage point. Perhaps, if we're being particularly generous toward cinema, we could count shifts in fixed-camera views in games like *Heavy Rain* and *Metal Gear Solid* as a type of jump cut, since the action is disrupted rather than continuous. But in most of these cases, shifts in camera correspond only with changes in location, not changes in the way a video game mediates the player's relationship to space or action or theme. (n.p.)

Bogost (2010) goes on to surmise that "the most important feature of *Heavy Rain*, the design choice that makes it more important than any other game in separating from rather than drawing games toward film, is its rejection of editing in favor of prolonging" (n.p.). Extending Bogost's ideas, *Heavy Rain* may be thought of as an example of what has been termed "slow cinema" (Jaffe, 2014), which is endemic to contemporary international art cinema. Bogost's suggestion that the way games focus on "extension, addition, prolonging" allows them "to linger on the mundane instead of cutting to the

consequential" (n.p.) very much connects with this tendency in art cinema.[28] Indeed, Brooker (2009a) equates the virtual camera in a videogame with what he calls "cinematic avant garde."

As with Bogost, Brooker isolates the nature of the first-person shooter game's uninterrupted view of events to produce a sensation akin to a lack of editing much like "Tarkovsky's lengthy takes, with the unblinking stare at violence in *Irreversible* (Noé, 2002), and *Hidden* (Haneke, 2005): with rarities like *Timecode* (Figgis, 2002) and *Russian Ark* (Sokurov, 2002)" (p. 128). Brooker goes on to say while "videogame cinema… seems to imply an aesthetic of cut-and-paste and flashy, funky superficiality, the first-person shooter and third person shooter modes actually look nothing like a Tony Scott movie. As cinema, the videogame would not be youthful rebellion, but the mature challenge of the avant-garde" (2009a, p. 128). Having a solid grasp of the complexities of viewpoint and progression helps to understand what is required when considering film-to-game adaptation.

Affective involvement is crucial to the cinema experience and so this is yet another significant overlap that needs to be considered in the context of continuities between film and games. Jonathan Frome has devoted considerable effort to essaying ways in which videogames generate emotion (Frome & Smuts, 2004; Frome 2006, 2007). Frome and Smuts deal with the notion of suspense and how it is generated in both film and videogames, isolating factors such as fear, hope and uncertainty, and determining that helplessness is a central element in establishing videogame suspense by "limiting interactivity at key points" (p. 31). Frome (2007) constructs a model of:

> Emotional response to the single player game based on two roles players occupy during gameplay and four different types of emotion. The emotion types are based on different ways players can interact with a videogame: as a simulation, as a narrative, as a game *qua* game, and as a crafted piece of art. (p. 831)

Frome distinguishes between players enacting an observer-participant role and players enacting an actor-participant role.

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[28] Nitsche (2005) discusses interactive montage in relation to first-person point-of-view games.

	Audience Roles	
Types of Emotion	*Observer-participant*	*Actor-participant*
Ecological	Sensory environment	Proprioception
Narrative	Narrative situations	Roleplay
Game	Game Events	Gameplay
Artifact	Design	Artistry

Table 5. Frome's emotional response to single player game categories (Frome, 2007, p. 834)

His model accounts for eight ways that videogames create emotion, proposing a system of classifying emotions "based on the different aspects of a videogame to which a player might respond" (p. 832). Game emotions relate to competition, narrative emotions relate to the game's characters and events, artifact emotions, conceptualised by Ed Tan (2000), are those generated by our response to a crafted art object, or "emotions of aesthetic evaluation" (p. 833). In this way, Frome explains critical judgement as a type of emotion. "An ecological emotion responds to what the videogame represents and responds to it as if it was real" (p. 833), for instance, playing a horror game may make a player jump with fright, as if the imagined fear is real.

Cinema Envy

Early videogames relied on abstract shapes to represent concrete figures (Wolf, 2003), and many positioned a type of narrative frame as a pretext for action. This pretext was employed to charge the abstract representation and gameplay with a dramatic resonance borrowed from the narrative-based arts. The player may then consider a grander purpose to their play with fictional consequences to the storyline. This association of character and dramatic fiction with abstract figures and spaces provided narrative rationale for gameplay.

In an assessment of the influence of film on games, McGann (2003) claims that "cinema has become an overbearing influence on games" and that "in an effort to create games with cinematic aesthetics, some essential qualities of game are invariably being

diminished" (p. iii). In this relatively early game studies dissertation, McGann cites Hideo Kojima's lengthy cut-scenes in his *Metal Gear Solid* series (Konami, 1998–2015) as examples of cinema envy. McGann quotes Steven Poole (2000): "Cinema Envy in conjunction with laziness has led to '…the slavish plagiarism of the same old cinema aesthetics,' which in turn has led to an artistic stasis, with games being stuck in an '…arrested adolescence'" (p 254). Jenkins (2005) considers this tendency in light of critic Gilbert Seldes's concept of the "lively arts":

> Games should not achieve aesthetic recognition by giving themselves over to "cinema envy," (ludologists) warn, but should remain true to their roots. Seldes's concept of the lively arts may, in fact, offer us a way out of this binary (ludology / cinema-based narratology) since he focuses primarily on the kinetic aspects of popular culture, aspects that can operate inside or outside a narrative frame. Poole arrives at a similar conclusion: "A beautifully designed videogame invokes wonder as the fine arts do, only in a uniquely kinetic way. Because the videogame *must* move, it cannot offer the lapidary balance of composition that we value in painting; on the other hand, because it *can* move, it is a way to experience architecture, and more than that to create it, in a way which photographs or drawings can never compete. If architecture is frozen music, then a videogame is liquid architecture." (p. 180)

By drawing on Seldes, Jenkins finds an alternative to the strictly essentialist positions of the ludology versus narratology debate. A key consideration is perhaps not to think that games must *be* stories, but rather how games may (or may not) choose to employ narrative, within their set of rules systems and kinetic form. Cinema envy has grown ever stronger in recent console generations with games such as *Heavy Rain* (2010) and *L.A. Noire* (Rockstar, 2011) (Boxer, 2011). As technology has evolved in processing power and complexity this has led to a higher premium on realism in representation (King & Krzywinska, 2006b) and a higher level of incorporation of elements of film grammar.

This chapter investigates the formal properties of videogames and the continuities exisiting between films and games. An understanding of said formal properties leads to the construction of this dissertation's film-to-game adaptation models via the textual

analysis of a series of videogame case studies. The following chapter lays the groundwork for consideration of the key theories of textual adaptation and transmedia storytelling which underpin the operation of the models.

Chapter 2.

Adaptation Theory and Transmediality

Writing in relation to the film adaptations of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954), Long (2007) notes "that every time a story is adapted into a different media form, it's a reinterpretation" (p. 22). He cites a conversation with media scholar William Uricchio in which Uricchio states:

> No one ever "saw" Frodo or the rest: every casting decision, every image, every sound, "translates" Tolkien's words, and is but one of an infinite number of such translations or embodiments or performances; and these… are profound "changes" in their own right. (p. 23)

The changes to which Uricchio refers relate to Carroll's medium specificity theory and its significance in translating ideas across media. Adaptation as reinterpretation is a central question when considering translating the cinematic into the intimate interactive form of a videogame. The ways in which story has been integrated into games borrows much from both literary and filmic traditions and it is this very practice—the transferal of linear paradigms to a nonlinear medium—that is at the heart of the problematisation of game narrative. It has been argued that there exists a natural clash between games and narrative in that a conflict exists between interactivity and storytelling itself.

Building on conceptions of narrative explored in Chapter 1, this chapter outlines the various approaches, key ideas and major theories of textual adaptation. The traditional mode that these studies deal with is literature into film (Andrew, 1984; Bluestone, 1957; Whelehan, 1999; Cartmell & Whelehan, 2010; Hutcheon, 2006; Stam & Raengo, 2005; Wagner, 1975). In considering the existing models and strategies of adaptation, germane concepts emerge which assist the construction of the film-to-game adaptation

models forming part of the framework of this thesis. These theories of adaptation are most pertinent to the Reflection Model of adaptation outlined in Chapter 6 of this thesis. Basic issues addressed in this chapter include: reasons for adaptation, the relationship between texts, and the notion of fidelity or faithfulness. The chapter introduces modes and strategies of adaptation which is deduced from existing theory. Particular manipulations of formal factors lead to strategies of adaptation, and those patterns of strategies form the models of this study. This chapter also examines the various ways in which the concepts and terminology surrounding transmedia studies have been articulated. The central aesthetics of transmedia storytelling are considered, including Jenkins's principles of transmedia storytelling as well as Wolf's processes of transmedial growth and internarrative theory. The crucial distinction between transmedia storytelling and adaptation is explicated and the relationship of transmedia to film-to-game adaptation is identified.

Approaches to Adaptation Studies

Adaptation theory originated within literary analysis with the initial purpose to analyse the adaptation of written stories (Ellis, 1982; McFarlane, 1996). Closely aligned with the emerging scholarship within film studies, adaptation theory emerged to deal primarily with the adaptation of novels to film, although plays to film also garnered some significance as Shakespeare scholarship moved into the realm of filmed adaptation. Due to film studies's status as an emerging discipline and its connection to literature departments, adaptation was a natural area of investigation that historically remained a common popular and academic approach to the study of film, although it did not share a similar academic regard:

> Admittedly, the scholarly study of adaptation has a long history in the study of film. Indeed, it is one of the most common and longest running approaches to film in both popular and academic discussions. Alas, until very recently it has also been one of the most neglected, almost maligned, within the field of film studies itself. Film scholar Thomas Leitch accounts for this by explaining that adaptation study "traces its descent more directly from literary studies," and it has tended, through an insistence on the topic of fidelity, to assert hierarchies of narrative art,

> aesthetic form, and chronology of production that privileged text over image as a storytelling mode. (Papazian & Sommers, 2013b, para. 12)

Along with a diminished consideration, adaptation theory has exhibited a general flavour of disdain for the hypotext medium. Just as film was initially considered a lesser art form than literature, the emergence of comic books, videogames and television makes evident similar trends of cultural aversion with a reluctance for such media to be recognised as "worthy" art forms. Stam (2000) describes the high-minded perspectives applied to adaptation in the following oft-cited quote:

> The language of criticism dealing with the film adaptation of novels has often been profoundly moralistic, awash in terms such as infidelity, betrayal, deformation, violation, vulgarization, and desecration, each accusation carrying its specific charge of outraged negativity. Infidelity resonates with overtones of Victorian prudishness; betrayal evokes ethical perfidy; deformation implies aesthetic disgust; violation calls to mind sexual violence; vulgarization conjures up class degradation; and desecration intimates a kind of religious sacrilege toward the "sacred word." (p. 54)

As Stam (2000) points out since adaptations by definition draw from existing works, often times with established taste cultures associated with the hypotext, key aspects of the concept itself has been branded with an inferior regard. This idea is one which has operated with respect to film-to-game adaptation throught game history.

***What* is adapted?**

At its heart, adaptation has been considered a process of transposition or translation, and there are various dimensions of what could potentially be adapted. Seymour Chatman (1978), drawing from the Russian formalist tradition, uses the terms "story" and "discourse" to separate narrative events from the mode in which they are presented. Bordwell (2008) further articulates these elements by identifying three dimensions of narrative – story world, narration and plot.

Stam (2000) initially considers adaptation as translation: "The trope of adaptation as translation suggests a principled effort of inter-semiotic transposition, with the inevitable losses and gains typical of any translation" (p. 62). Hutcheon (2006) furthers this argument:

> In many cases, because adaptations are to a different medium, they are re-mediations, that is, specifically translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images). This is translation but in a very specific sense: as transmutation or transcoding, that is, as necessarily a recoding into a new set of conventions as well as signs. (p. 16)

In addition to the translation of sign systems, it is worthwhile to recall that the term "remediation" is also employed by Bolter and Grusin (1999) in their influential work where they argue that new media forms remediate existing media forms. It is this process that occurs in film-to-game adaptation.

Textuality includes both concrete and tonal dimensions. Here one can consider both denotative and connotative elements including ideological dimensions. Hutcheon (2006) asks the question: what exactly is adapted in adaptation? With reference to Linden (1971) and Seger (1992) she notes a trend of both reviewers and audiences referring to:

> The elusive notion of the "spirit" of a work or an artist that has to be captured and conveyed in the adaptation for it to be a success. The 'spirit' of Dickens or Wagner is invoked, often to justify radical changes in the 'letter' or form. Sometimes it is the "tone" that is deemed central, through rarely defined (e.g. Linden 1971, p. 158, p. 163); at other times it is "style." (Seger 1992, p. 157). (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 10)

Hutcheon points out that there are a number of factors to consider as expression can be separated from ideas, or the conceptual might be separated from the concrete.

Major Theories of Adaptation

The Reflection Model of film-to-game adaptation promulgated in this thesis draws directly from the scholarship on adaptation discussed in this section and therefore has bearing on the way in which games that employ a film's narrative as the basis for the structure, story world and progression of events are adapted.

Wagner's Three Modes of Adaptation

Wagner (1975) can be seen to forge one of the earliest established paths into adaptation theory. His ideas are firmly based on the process of novel to film adaptation and are very much concerned with notions of fidelity and the 'success' of the adaptive transformation through the lens of the original work. Wagner (1975) critiques George Bluestone's early considerations into the relationship between novel and film; pointing out the troublesome relationship between literary fiction and its onscreen adaptive state:

> George Bluestone calls fiction "a medium antithetical to film," and by being linguistic rather than visual, it is so. But this is surely to miss the point. Far more than poetry, an intellectual mode, the novel is a dream in the sense that it has generally given us an exterior world as seen by the reflections of a character. Virginia Woolf told us that all "which is accessible to words alone, the cinema must avoid." In its *secondary* illusion it must: but its art is acting for a primary agent, the dreamer. (p. 220)

Here Bluestone sees the relationship between novel and film as highly problematic, whereas Wagner responds that the notion of dreaming and the visualisation of the character's exterior world is a core concern of a filmmaker who makes narrative cinema. Thus, even though film loses the literary quality of the prose, it still creates the same sense of the character's perspective and at its essence is concerned with representing her world. Those story worlds are conceived, created, designed and staged in light of the central characters, and as Leo Braudy (1986) has argued in relation to the central characters of Martin Scorsese's cinema, the film's world "radiates out from them" (p. 25).

Wagner (1975) quotes Béla Balázs when considering novel to film adaptation, pointing to the relevance and potential success of the adaptive process:

> There can be no doubt that it is possible to take the subject, the story, the plot of a novel, turn it into an ellipsis film and yet produce perfect works of art in each case – the form being in each case adequate to the content… It is possible because, while the subject, or story, of both works is identical, their *content* is nevertheless different. It is this different *content* that is adequately expressed in the changing form resulting from the adaptation. (p. 221)

Wagner (1975) distils the processes of adaptation (specifically the conversion of literary fiction to film) into three categories he terms "transposition," "commentary," and "analogy." He identifies transposition as the most commonly used, and defines it as follows: "a novel is directly given on the screen with the minimum of apparent interference" (pp. 222–223). He takes a negative evaluative stance on this method, claiming it to be "the least satisfactory" whilst citing Balázs: the same material can only successfully be put into a new form "if the terms 'content' and 'form' do not exactly cover what we are accustomed to call material, action, plot, story, subject, etc. on the one hand and 'art form' on the other" (pp. 222–223). Wagner's issue with transposition adaptation is that he sees this approach as a (mere) translation of a work, the adaptation lacking any consideration of the new medium and the potential artistry inherent in adaptation from one medium to another.

Wagner applies his second category, termed "commentary," more loosely and also suggests alternate terms "re-emphasis" or "restructure," defining this as "where an original is taken and either purposefully or inadvertently altered in some respect… when there has been a different intention on the part of the filmmaker, rather than an infidelity or outright violation" (p. 223). This thesis posits that Wagner's transposition may be thought of as a purely theoretical construct in adaptation, since in practice, transposition will inevitably incorporate some degree of Wagner's commentary. As an example, the very process of adapting a written form into a visual one will require alteration in order to enable it to exist in the new medium.

Wagner's third category of "analogy" relates to an adaptation making considerable alteration to the original subject material. This category is confined to adaptations that have sought to identify analogous themes amongst different time periods, thereby creating a new work of art that layers meanings from the ideologies of the original work with parallel relevant contemporary settings. Wagner gives examples of shifting time periods of the fictional work into a present day contemporary setting (such as Amy Heckerling's 1995 film *Clueless* as an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*). He goes on to say that an analogy represents "a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making *another* work of art" (p. 227).

Andrew's Three Concepts of Adaptation

Andrew (1984) considers adaptation as a text that shifts its "representation in another sign system" (p. 97). As Andrew's primary concern focuses on film adaptation, he states that adaptation is "the matching of the cinematic sign system to prior achievement in some other system" (p. 96). He explicates three general modes of relationships between film and source text, stating: "borrowing is the most frequent mode of adaptation. Here the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text" (p. 98). Andrew's concept of borrowing is akin to the general idea of intertextuality, where one text refers to another text by virtue of some inherent textual relationship. He considers this mode of 'borrowing' to be quite broad and loose, and defines a second mode with an opposing, stricter approach as 'intersecting', where: "the uniqueness of the original text is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation" (p. 99). Andrew terms his third concept "fidelity of transformation," which can be seen as analogous to Wagner's transposition adaptation: "Here it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text" (p. 100).

Genette's Theory of Transtextuality

The seminal work of narratologist Gerard Genette has contributed much to the more recent scholarship on adaptation and transmediality. Stam (2000) cites Genette's description of transtextuality as "all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts" (p. 65). Genette identifies various relationships

between texts in his theory of transtextuality, classifying five types of relationships: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, archetextuality and hypertextuality (Stam, 2005, pp. 27–31). Gennette employs the term "hypotext" to describe a source text, and the term "hypertext" to describe the adaptation. These terms are particularly useful to this thesis and will be referred to throughout.

Taking them in turn, *intertextuality* refers to coexistent works where one text makes reference to a different text in a variety of ways. These references may occur via quotation, allusion, or even plagiarism. *Paratextuality* refers to categories within the work as a whole. This includes prefaces, titles, credits, particular scenes, DVD audio commentaries, illustrations and posters (such as the colour illustration of a book, the poster illustration of a film, or a game slick cover).[29] *Metatextuality* refers to critical relationships between texts where one text explicitly cites or silently evokes another. This category involves such types of adaptations as remakes and parodies. *Archetextuality* refers to so-called unmarked or unannunciated adaptations where the source text is hidden from the adaptation. A classic example of archetextuality is seen in the relationship between Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in that no reference exists in the text to the film being an adaptation of Conrad's novel. *Archetextuality* may also refer to false or misleading adaptations whereby the source is enunciated in the adaptation, however there is no evidence of the source actually being adapted. *Hypertextuality* refers to the relationship between a later text called the hypertext and an earlier text as a major source called the hypotext. The hypertext transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends the hypotext, using processes of selection, amplification, and concretisation. Stam, Burgoyne & Flitterman-Lewis (1992) include remakes, sequels and parodies as part of this category (pp. 209–210).

Fidelity and the question of its place

A crucial repositioning of fidelity as the chief notion in adaptation study occurs early in the twenty first century when Leitch and Stam question its validity as a primary factor, instead "identifying adaptation as a process—rather than a pair of texts waiting to be

[29] Gray (2010) discusses these paratexts in light of contemporary media theory.

compared—they drew attention to a complex series of operations manifest in the process" (Papazian & Sommers, 2013b, para. 12).

Elliott (2004) refers to the influential nature of Wagner's models, stating that they are "valued and ranked according to their degree of *in*fidelity to the original" (p. 220). She says that Dudley Andrew argued "more often for a balanced translation model, in which fidelity to the novel and to the conventions of film are honored equally." She says "Brian McFarlane declares the fidelity preoccupation a 'near-fixation,' 'unilluminating,' and a 'doomed enterprise'" (Elliott, 2004, p. 220).

Stam (2000) labels fidelity a "highly problematic" concept and interrogates whether strict fidelity can even be possible (p. 55), considering the concept in relation to a work's essence, and the impossibility of capturing such a thing:

> The notion of "fidelity" is essentialist in relation to both media involved. First, it assumes that a novel "contains" an extractable "essence," a kind of "heart of the artichoke" hidden "underneath" the surface details of style. Hidden within *War and Peace*, it is assumed, there is an originary core, a kernel of meaning or nucleus of events that can be "delivered" by an adaptation. But in fact there is no such transferable core…The text feeds on and is fed an infinitely permutating intertext, which is seen through ever-shifting grids of interpretation. (p. 57)

Following the vein of whether fidelity ought to even hold a central concern in the relevance to the nature of adaptation studies, other critics began to explore and reject notions of adaptation being beholden to notions of purity, correctness, and integrity. As Papazian & Sommers (2013b) identify:

> At the very beginning of the twenty-first century, Leitch and, even more powerfully, his film studies colleague Robert Stam, rejected fidelity as the place to begin studying adaptations. Identifying adaptation as a process—rather than a pair of texts waiting to be compared—they drew attention to a complex series of operations manifest in the process. Stam, for instance, rejected the idea of there being an original text for any adaptation or any other sort of text, instead insisting, quite persuasively, that adaptations must be conceptualized as part of the

> "ongoing whirl of intertextual references and transformations, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation with no clear point of origin" ("Beyond Fidelity" 66). (para. 12)

In further consideration of the relevance of the original text, Murray (2012) positions the rejection of the concept of fidelity as the first of three major waves of innovation in adaptation studies, proposing this concept never actually existed in academic adaptation criticism in the first place. She argues a second wave appeared in the late 1970s with a focus on theories of narratology—such as the significant contributions of McFarlane (1996)—and suggests the third wave imported concepts from post structuralism and cultural studies, which "opened adaptation studies up to concepts of audience agency" (p. 368).

Murray (2012) shifts the emphasis from textual analysis to propose an industry-centric model of adaptation where this "new adaptation model would take account of adaptation's role as the driving force in contemporary multi-platform media, and would seek to replicate this commercial centrality by according adaptation an equivalently central role in theorisations of twenty-first century culture" (p. 378). Murray's consideration of the industrial dimension within contemporary adaptation analysis is incorporated into this thesis's design.

Cartmell and Whelehan (2010) chart the intellectual tendencies within adaptation studies, attempting to tease out the various strands that the field has bifurcated into. Their claim is that "studying adaptations produces something new that neither belongs to film nor literature: it may well constitute the legacy of theoretical debates, touching narratology, spectatorship, the arts economy, and so on, but the material is entirely a consequence of the choice to accept that adaptation is a process which *is of scholarly interest in its own right"* (p. 14). Cartmell and Whelehan provide a graphic (Figure 5) that encapsulates these concerns incorporating areas of overlap.

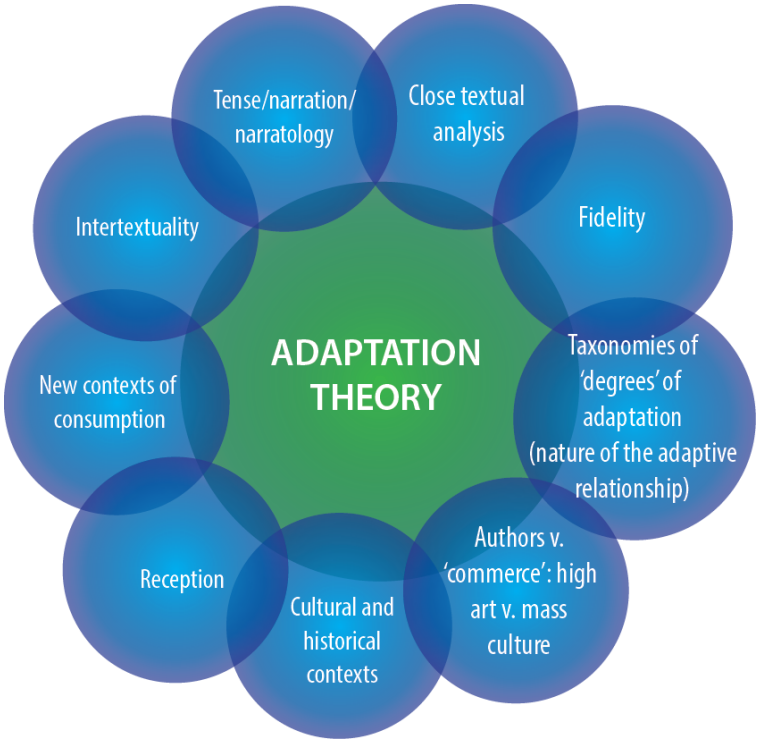

Figure 5. Adaptation theory (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2010, p. 15)

In Carmell and Whelehan's (2010) words, this diagram:

> Attempts to visualise and summarise the state of adaptations today… Here the putative 'field' of adaptations studies is surrounded or shaped by the dominant discourses of textual inquiry which circulate in its wake. Rather than being framed as indebted (or profoundly prejudiced) by one topic over another, adaptation studies is as much a creation of these discourses as well as sustaining them by its existence. (pp. 14–15)

The combination of approaches employed in this thesis reflects Cartmell and Whelehan's conceptualization of overlapping areas of significance within the study of adaptation.

Adaptation Analysis Strategies

Stam argues that according to Genette, a practical mode for addressing adaptations is highly dependent on narratological factors (Stam, 2005). When considering the role of

narrative in adaptation, Stam (2000) pinpoints permutations in locale, time, and language as essential factors to the "transformational grammar of adaptation" (p. 69).

The main function of narrative is to act as a structuring device, as it is one of the organising systems available to a game designer. The ways in which story has been integrated into games borrows much from both literary and filmic traditions and it is in this very practice, the transferral of linear paradigms to a nonlinear medium, that is central to the problematisation of game narrative. It has been argued that there exists a natural clash between games and narrative in that a conflict exists between interactivity and storytelling itself (Juul, 2001).

Ryan (2004b) argues that game form can draw from a traditional storytelling tendency; as plots evolve internal story questions are answered: "The secret to the narrative success of games is their ability to exploit the most fundamental of the forces that move a plot forward: the solving of problems" (p. 349).

Particular manipulations of formal factors lead to strategies of adaptation. Such strategies of film adaptation include resequencing, whereby the temporal order of a scene or moment is shifted in the narrative. Addition refers to the presence of a scene or moment not existent in the film hypotext whereas omission is the elimination of a scene or moment in the adapted work. Condensation happens when scenes or moments are combined together. Interpolation is the inclusion of titles and captions to explicate narrative information. Shifts in emphasis occur when the significance of moments or scenes are either amplified or muted in the adapted work. These adaptation strategies may be combined together and operate as part of an overall approach in adapting a text into a new medium.

The following table (Table 2) provides an overview of the aforementioned techniques. These strategies are drawn from existing scholarship in adaptation studies (McFarlane, 1996) and may be applied to film-to-game adaptation and are incorporated into the textual analyses of the case studies in Chapters 6–8.

Term	Definition
Resequencing	A change in narrative order occurs from hypotext to hypertext.
Addition	The hypertext adaptation adds a story aspect (character, scene, sub-plot, theme) that is entirely new (also includes increasing the narrative frequency of an event).
Omission / Elision	A story aspect from the hypotext is not included (no reference exists) in the hypertext / a story aspect is alluded to but is not directly presented.
Expansion	The time taken for an event in the hypertext is significantly longer than the hypotext (also see shift in emphasis).
Compression	An existing scene is temporally compressed in the hypertext (also see shift in emphasis).
Combination / Condensation	An existing character or scene is combined with another or several are condensed into one or fewer.
Interpolation	Incorporation of a natively formal technique which translates an element from the hypotext.
Shift in emphasis	A minor scene or sub-plot becomes a major moment or a minor character becomes more significant (or vice versa).
Changes in Viewpoint or Agency / Focalisation	The focus on one character in the source film becomes focused on another character or the player-character of the game adaptation.
Changes in Range of Story information	An unrestrictedly narrated scene becomes restricted (or vice versa).
Changes in Depth of Story information	An objectively narrated scene becomes perceptually subjective or mentally subjective (or vice versa).

Table 2. Major Adaptation Strategies

The history of ideas circulating around textual adaptation contribute to the core intellectual foundation of this study in attempting to negotiate the transformation of works from one medium into another where the source work is reinterpreted into another medium.

Wolf's (2012b) definition of adaptation follows traditional parameters: "When a story existing in one medium is adapted for presentation in another medium" (p. 245). This definition is in no way revolutionary; however, Wolf goes on to argue that adaptation itself is a form of transmediality. There are two registers of transmediality according to Wolf (2012b): "adaptation" may be considered a type of "weak transmediality," reserving another category for works that demonstrate "transmedial growth," generally considered to exhibit a stronger permutation of transmediality. The nature of transmediality and the differentiation and interplay between adaptation and transmedia storytelling will be discussed in the second half of this chapter.

Defining Transmedia: Charting the History of Scholarship

There are competing paradigms for the nature of definition and meaning when considering the various terms associated with transmedia, which may be considered somewhat synonymous with the term, "crossmedia." [30] Jenkins (2011) states: "Transmedia, used by itself, simply means 'across media.'" (n.p.). Considering this notion further, Beddows (2012) discusses the idea of cross-media entertainment:

> Cross-media is a term which has been applied to content distribution models emerging from various sectors within the culture industries (Dailey, Demo & Spillman 2003; Deuze 2007; Huang et al. 2006). A review of the literature on cross-media entertainment reveals that, like transmedia, the field is subject to conceptual uncertainty. (p. 3)

In an early work on popular entertainment franchises, Kinder (1991) uses the term "transmedia intertextuality" (p. 40) with regard to what she calls "entertainment supersystems." She defines an entertainment supersystem as:

> A network of intertextuality constructed around a figure or group of figures from pop culture who are either fictional (like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, the

[30] There is an inconsistency in scholarship as to how the term "crossmedia" is presented—sometimes hyphenated and sometimes not.

> characters from *Star Wars*, *The Super Mario Bros.*, *The Simpsons*, *The Muppets*, *Batman*, and *Dick Tracy*) or "real"… In order to be a supersystem, the network must cut across several modes of image production. (pp. 122–123)

Aarseth (2006) differentiates between two forms of crossmedia production: synchronous and asynchronous. Aarseth sees synchronous productions as: "Crossmedia productions that produce the media versions in parallel," and asynchronous as: "productions that take place sequentially, as a migration between media, and where the first instance usually is seen as the original content" (p. 3). He further defines synchronous types as 'strong' and asynchronous as 'weak.' When considering synchronous production, we can think of it as a production which has planned content across multiple channels at the point of creation, while "[asynchronous crossmedia] becomes merely an *adaptation*, where a work is translated from one medium to another, without any plan for such transfer at the time of first creation" (p. 3).

Scholars dealing with the concept and definition of transmedia agree that the terminology is still undergoing clarification, and that the idea requires relative distinction:

> Indeed, transmedia is only the most recent term employed to describe this area, but it is the most widely known (in part due to the increasingly pervasive nature of the phenomenon). Since the area is in flux and crosses a wide range of creative sectors, it may be that the term "transmedia" and many like it are placeholders. (Dena, 2009, p. 16)

The three primary terms used here are "transmedia" (Dena, 2009), "transmedial" (Wolf, 2012b), and "transmedia storytelling" (Jenkins, 2007). Scholars use these three terms in similar ways, which creates a deal of confusion, and a critical need for a definition of the terminology as it applies to this thesis. One of the areas of importance to this study is the distinction between "transmedia" and "transmedia storytelling," as the idea of transmedia evokes the concept and practice of adaptation.

Transmedia and transmedia storytelling are terms that define aspects of media studies as well as terms used in media practice. The Producer's Guild of America instituted the

term "Transmedia Producer" in 2010. This type of producer would coordinate "a Transmedia Narrative project (which) must consist of three or more narrative storylines existing within the same fictional universe" (Fry et al, p. 4). Johnson (2013) draws the connection between franchising, licensing and transmedia storytelling: "Whereas transmedia storytelling suggests cultural artistry and participatory culture, 'franchising' calls equal if not more attention to corporate structure and the economic organization of that productive labor" (p. 33). Nichols (2008) examines the industrial advantages and tensions to synergy strategy, considering videogames as an ancillary market.

Henry Jenkins's ideas of transmedia storytelling have developed since his first consideration of the term in 2003. We can track the progress and rethinking of his initial concepts through a sequence of articles (Bordwell, 2009; Jenkins, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009e, 2009f, 2011). Jenkins gives us what he sees as the determinable elements in his article "Transmedia Storytelling 101," beginning with a foundational definition:

> Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (Jenkins, 2007)[31]

"Transmedia" / "transmedial" refers to texts that exist in multiple media forms, while "transmedia storytelling" refers to an integrated and systematic dispersal of narrative over multiple media forms. The process of breaking down the term transmedia storytelling into definable factors involves numerous considerations with multiple revisitations. This can be attributed to the emerging nature of the concept as well as the immense range of people embracing the term who may not have a comprehensive understanding of it. The phrase (and its variations) is also repurposed for different groups, audiences, and contexts (see Aarseth, 2006; Aldred, 2012a; Beddows, 2012; Davidson, 2010a; Dena, 2009; Elkington, 2005; Giovagnoli, 2011; Long, 2007; Rose, 2011).

[31] Jenkins uses the term "the mother ship" to describe "the primary work which anchors the franchise" within a transmedia property (Jenkins, 2009e).

Dena's (2009) contribution to transmedia theory articulates a complex argument of ways in which "practitioners conceive and design a fictional world to be expressed across distinct media and environments" (p. i). Similarly, Giovagnoli's book (2011) is a more discursive, scholarly treatment of transmedia structures and practices, while Rose (2011) casts the net wide on contemporary media culture through interviews with major media producers and posits a thesis of non-linear storytelling, which he refers to as "deep media." Beddows (2012) addresses key questions relating to how audiences engage with commercial transmedia texts. She argues that transmedial consumption is "best facilitated by a combination of high levels of engagement and an undifferentiated mode preference. This implies the movement of a single audience across multiple story modes and is defined as story / content-driven use" (p. iii).

Most recently Harvey (2015) articulates a taxonomy of transmedia in which he identifies five approaches: "directed transmedia storytelling," "devolved transmedia storytelling," "detached transmedia storytelling," "directed user-generated content," and emergent user-generated content." He explains the first three as thus: directed transmedia storytelling is an idealistic view of transmedia as a coordinated and coherent whole, where the IP holder exercises strict control over the material; devolved transmedia storytelling is where expansions are created by a third party and often have diegetic distance from the material created by the IP holder; detached transmedia storytelling is where unofficial transmedia expansions are created beyond the legal arrangements of the former two categories (pp. 187–189).

Aesthetics of Transmedia Storytelling

Jenkins (2007) isolates a number of factors that determine transmedia form, observing the narrative's tendency to expand outwards in order to encompass:

> Complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories… The extension may provide insight into the characters and their motivations… may flesh out aspects of the fictional world… or may bridge between events depicted in a series of sequels… Ideally, each individual episode

> must be accessible on its own terms even as it makes a unique contribution to the narrative system as a whole. (n.p.)

In one of the most extended discussions of transmedia practice, Jenkins (2006a) articulates the position of the *Enter the Matrix* game within the broader *Matrix* franchise transmedia storytelling strategy: "The Wachowski brothers[32] were so uncompromising in their expectations that consumers would follow the franchise that much of the payoff of *Revolutions*[33] is accessible only to people who have played the game" (p. 126). This approach to transmedia is known as "deep transmedia," and both the key challenge and potential satisfaction of deep transmedia is the necessary commensurate investment of time and effort required by audiences. Jenkins says that film viewers have to do their "homework" (2006a, p. 94) in order to be able to appreciate *The Matrix* films—this includes watching *The Animatrix* shorts (Various, 2003), and most importantly playing the *Enter the Matrix* videogame. As Jenkins notes: "*The Matrix* is entertainment for the age of media convergence, integrating multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium" (2006a, p. 95). Jenkins considers *The Matrix* as "a flawed experiment, an interesting failure" (p. 97). He discusses overly negative reactions to *The Matrix* franchise and issues of evaluative criticism:

> Many film critics trashed the later sequels, because they were not sufficiently self-contained and this bordered on incoherent. Many games critics trashed the games because they were too dependent on the film content and did not offer sufficient new experiences for players… I would argue, however, that we do not yet have very good aesthetic criteria for evaluating works that play themselves out across multiple media. (Jenkins, 2006a, pp. 96–97)

In a sense, Jenkins is saying the trilogy was far ahead of the audience, and to be able to appreciate the innovation happening here is beyond critics' ability to appreciate transmedia storytelling. This thesis is an attempt at contributing to Jenkins's call for "aesthetic criteria" as it applies to film and game transmediality.

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[32] The Wachowskis (who were brothers before their transgender transition) directed the film and also wrote the videogame.

[33] *The Matrix: Revolutions* (Wachowski bros., 2003) is the third installment of *The Matrix* film trilogy.

In his two-part online article "(The) Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: Seven Principles of Transmedia Storytelling" (2009e, 2009f) Jenkins reconsiders his initial breakdowns of the evolving transmedia factors. His concept of transmedia storytelling investigates the extent to which content has the capacity for what Jenkins describes as: spreadability, drillability, continuity, multiplicity, immersion, extractability, world-building, seriality, subjectivity, and performance. The principles germane to the thesis (continuity, multiplicity, world-building, and seriality) are articulated below.

Continuity / Multiplicity

In "(The) Revenge of the Origami Unicorn" Jenkins begins to challenge his earlier foundational concept of a "unified and coordinated experience" which is "systematically" dispersed across numerous channels. This idea can be exemplified when looking at the many transmedia franchises that prioritise a strict sense of "continuity" in the construction of the franchise. This approach "contributes to our appreciation of the 'coherence' and 'plausibility' of their fictional worlds" and gives a satisfaction to heavily invested fans who have amassed each various piece into "a meaningful whole" (Jenkins, 2009e).[34]

Dena (2009) explicates the significance of the world or universe guide as a kind of overarching style guide for a property to ensure both "visual continuity" and "world continuity" (pp. 139–141). However, the antithesis to a continuity-based franchise is one using the idea of "multiplicity," where the franchise will allow and encourage the same character to exist in parallel universes. Due to the growing complexity of a fictional universe it may be necessary for existing elements in a franchise to accommodate new material. The process of rewriting canon elements is known as "retroactive continuity" or "retconning" (Wolf, 2012b, pp. 213–15).

[34] Jenkins argues that fan fiction and other unauthorised fan generated extensions can work to the same aims of the transmedia campaigns, as it can amplify fan absorption and further open out our view of the works. He notes the fear and aversion to these unauthorised extensions from some producers whose franchises aim to adhere to a strict sense of continuity. However, he sees that the idea of multiplicity can be a liberating experience, where many different versions can exist together and bring fresh perspective to the world and its characters, and where producers can lessen the anxiety over the synchronicity in each detail.

Canonicity is a key concept related to continuity in that it expresses the relative internal veracity or authenticity of a text whether authorised by the license holders, determined by fans, or both. As Wolf explains:

> The idea of canon, that certain things are "true" for an imaginary world (that character, locations, and objects exist, and that events have happened within that world), demonstrates the desire for authenticity from the point of view of the audience, who are often concerned with demarcating what is "official" for a world or franchise. (2012b, pp. 270–271)[35]

Braids

Within considerations of world continuity and multiplicity, Wolf (2012b) posits a series of internarrative concepts germane to notions of continuity. Here he describes how a work's narrative threads are linked, giving rise to various permutations of "braids" which act as operational strategies for creating continuity across transmedia entries:

> While some stories are content to follow a single narrative thread, many stories, and storytelling traditions… bring together multiple narrative threads which run concurrently, with events that happen simultaneously in multiple threads. As multiple threads share the same diegetic materials, themes, or events, the individual threads can become tightly woven together into what we might call *narrative braids*. Here again, an audience will expect certain outcomes involving all the related threads within a braid… Stories can follow a single braid, or they might follow multiple braids, alternating between them. (Wolf, 2012b, p. 199)

In the case of *KotOR,* diegetic braiding exists by virtue of setting events in existing *Star Wars* locations such as Tatooine and Kashyyyk. In the case of *The Chronicles of Riddick* franchise*,* since *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* is a prequel to *Pitch Black,* retroactive causal braiding exists in that *Escape from Butcher Bay* teases out elements from *Pitch Black* and provides linkages between the prequel and the source film. Wolf goes on to discuss other types of braids:

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[35] Parker (2013) discusses canonicity in relation to the *Star Wars* franchise.

> Stories may have multiple narrative threads that have no connection to each other (and thus no braiding); they may have parallel threads that are thematically connected in order to compare and contrast characters in their situations, but with no direct diegetic contact between threads (which we could term *thematic braiding*); multiple threads which share the same locations, minor characters, and other details, but with no causal linkages between threads (*diegetic braiding*); and threads with causal linkages between them, in which the events of one thread have outcomes in other threads (*causal braiding*). (2012b, p. 199)

In a practical sense, threads may exhibit several types of braids as they may possess different functions across series entries.

World-Building

When considering the concept of world-building, Jenkins sees clear examples going far back into the history of science fiction, pointing to the author L. Frank Baum and his creation of *The Wizard of Oz*. Baum's universe involved not only books but a series of travel lectures "where he showed slides and short films, which illustrated different places within Oz and hinted at the events which had occurred there" (Jenkins, 2009f). Jenkins views the idea of world-building as strongly related to what Janet Murray describes as "the 'encyclopedic' impulse behind contemporary interactive fictions—the desire of audiences to map and master as much as they can know about such universes, often through the production of charts, maps, and concordances" (Jenkins, 2009f).

Any property that is transmedial moves beyond a single text in order for it to inhabit this distinction, that is, the world extends beyond the scope of its initial work. When considering the nature of transmediality, Wolf posits the transmedia property is only glimpsed at through the texts that represent it and the property exists beyond those media, with each text seen as a window onto the property (Wolf, 2012b, p. 248). Wolf's holistic understanding of imaginary world creation which includes such aspects as the fictional history and lore of the world acts as a powerful concept in understanding film-to-game adaptation.

Seriality

Seriality is a notion familiar to most audiences in the form of episodic television shows. Jenkins talks about the interaction of story and plot as a way to understand seriality: "The story refers to our mental construction of what happened which can be formed only after we have absorbed all of the available chunks of information. The plot refers to the sequence through which those bits of information have been made available to us. A serial, then, creates meaningful and compelling story chunks and then disperses the full story across multiple instalments" (Jenkins, 2009f).

Taking this mode of storytelling into the transmedia realm, the chunks of information become dispersed over many media systems. Jenkins points out the challenge presented here in finding ways to motivate audiences to actively uncover all the pieces of information, wondering how a cliffhanger can be replicated in the transmedia serial, and concludes there is much to learn from classical serials. Seriality also brings into question the process of nonlinear storytelling and the idea of story chunks being absorbed in an interchangeable order.

Sequence Elements

The relationships between various entries in a series depend on both fictional timeframe seriality and the relative time of release of each entry. Wolf (2012b, pp. 205–212) provides a categorisation of what he refers to as sequence elements. Wolf's sequence elements (see Figure 6) provide an important understanding of internarrative theory, to which this thesis, and in particular the construction of the three models of film-to-game adaptation, relate. In figure 6 the colour orange represents existing stories in a series, whereas blue represents an entirely new set of events. The colour green is used to differentiate from blue in that tansquel elements may revisit moments in exisiting stories, while the colour purple signifies an alternative perspective on existing events.

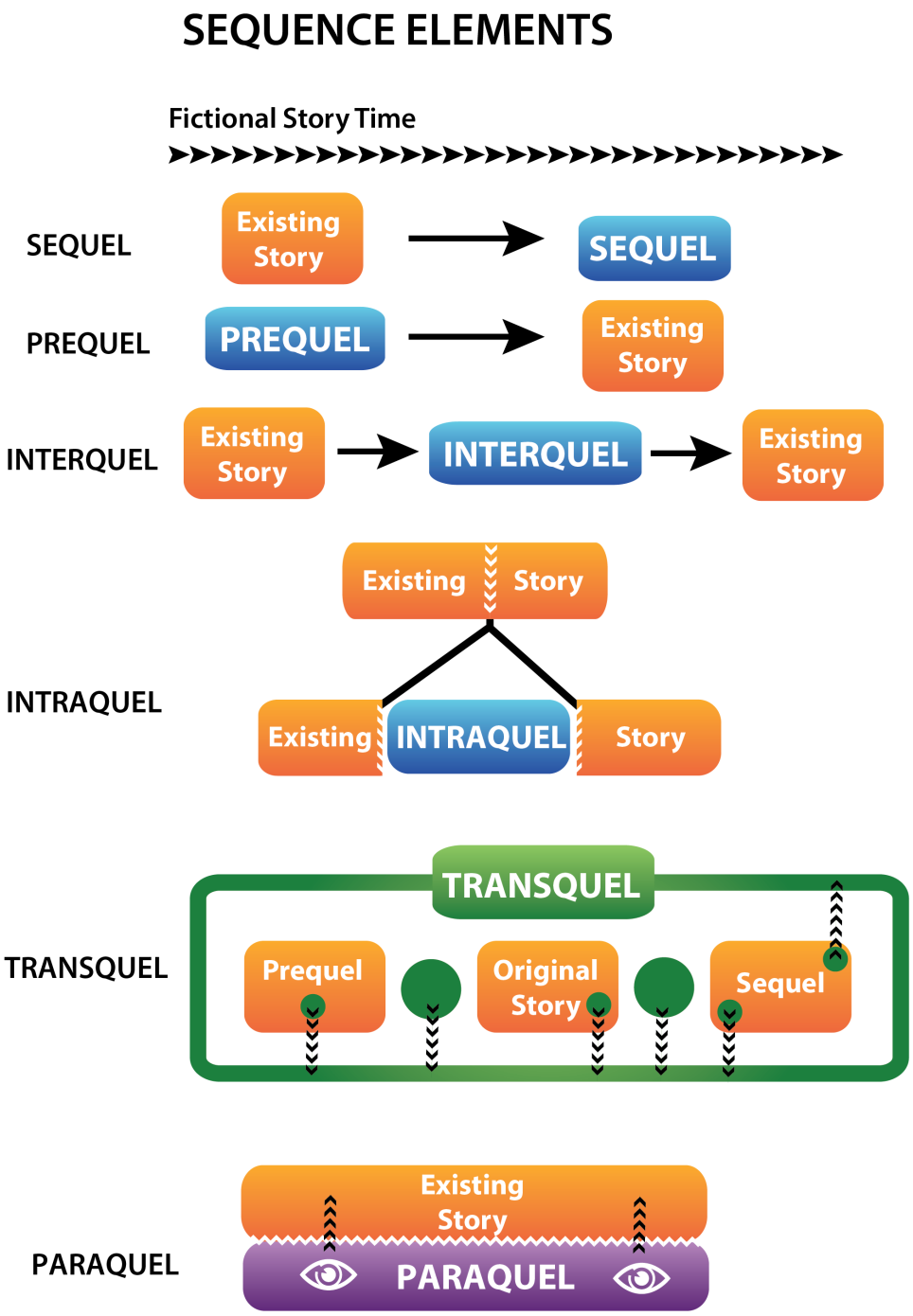

Figure 6. Wolf's sequence elements

Wolf (2012b) considers the sequel to be the most common sequence element, "as a story which takes place after an existing story, usually shares some common elements with the original story it follows, carrying them forward in time" (p. 205). The second most common sequence element being the prequel: "a story that comes before an existing story and acts as an expanded backstory for it" (p. 207). A significant example

of a game sequel is the well-regarded LucasArts adventure game *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* (LucasArts, 1992) which is set after the events of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Spielberg, 1989), while *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb* (LucasArts, 2003) is considered a direct prequel to *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (Spielberg, 1984).

Wolf (2012b) further articulates the prequel in terms of audience knowledge and expectation:

> Prequels are constrained by the works that come before them, even more than sequels, since characters' fates and situations' outcomes, which appear in the original work are already known; thus surprise can be lost, and the final ending state is more than predictable, it is already known for certain. We know which characters will not die, and we have some sense of how things will turn out in the end, unless we have not experienced the original work; and often a prequel will rely on the audience's knowledge of the original work, creating dramatic irony through the audience's knowledge of how things will eventually turn out and knowing what the characters do not know. (p. 207)

Each new entry in a series that precedes all of the existing entries then establishes itself as a series' prequel, while similarly, each new entry that follows an existing entry is considered a sequel. In relation to Gennette's categories of transtextuality, Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis (1992) consider sequels, and by extension, other sequence elements as part of hypertextuality (p. 210).

The second set of Wolf's (2012b) sequence elements involve texts existing within multiple entries in a series:

> An interquel is a sequence element that occurs between existing works in a series, while an intraquel is a sequence element that occurs during a gap within a single existing work. In both cases, the element's beginning and end points are known in advance, and the focus is on the transition between states, added detail, and revealed motivations that help to fill out an ellipsis, making character arcs and world arc more complete. (pp. 207–208)

An interquel follows existing works, however, depending on the intention at the time of its development, it may or may not be considered an interquel. For example, if a subsequent sequel is made that follows an existing sequel, the first sequel then becomes an interquel within the series timeline, even though it was considered a sequel at the time of original release. A useful example to illustrate this concept is the case of the *Star Wars* saga and the first major film release of a non-episode numbered instalment, Gareth Edwards's 2016's *Rogue One* (fully titled as *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*). Various LucasFilm sources refer to these "*Star Wars* Stories" as "standalone" films (Sciretta, 2015, n.p.) or "spin-offs"[36] rather than using language that suggests these films are series interquels. In truth, the events of *Rogue One* take place between the events of *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* (Lucas, 2005) and *Episode IV: A New Hope* (Lucas, 1977)—fulfilling the aforementioned definition of an interquel, being a sequence element that occurs between existing stories in a series. Far from acting as a standalone entry in the series, *Rogue One* contains narrative braids that both reach backwards to the Prequel Trilogy in addition to clear and significant braids tying *Rogue One* to *A New Hope*.

An interquel is an example of a type of Extension Model adaptation, and here we can refer to *Alien: Isolation* as it fits between the story timelines of *Alien* (Scott, 1979) and *Aliens* (Cameron, 1986). A second permutation of the interstitial story element is the intraquel. An intraquel narrative exists in a timeframe within an existing single work which has yet to be explored, such as in the unseen events signaled by an ellipsis. During this elliptical gap, an entirely new narrative is created. Even though an intraquel is considered a type of Extension Model adaptation, it may be more correct to refer to it as an expansion of an existing story. *007 Legends* (Activision, 2012) provides an unusual example of this as the entire game takes place during the period Bond is mortally wounded at the end of the pre-title sequence in *Skyfall* (Mendes, 2012). The game opens with an element of reflective overlap, where M tasks Moneypenny to shoot Patrice, she misses and hits Bond who then falls into the water below. As he's drowning, he recalls moments from his past adventures as though his entire life flashes before his eyes. Each one of these accounts for a level in *007 Legends*, so in essence the

[36] In the first instance in 2015 they were referred to as the "*Star Wars* Anthology Series" ("SWCA: Conversation with Gareth Edwards Panel Liveblog," 2015, n.p.).

events of the game take place in Bond's mind, based on his memories. Using narrative theory, we can say that the entire game is an example of mentally subjective depth of story information. Further, the main missions in *007 Legends* are based on iconic moments from films spanning the history of the franchise: *Goldfinger* (Hamilton, 1964), *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (Hunt, 1969), *Moonraker* (Gilbert, 1979), *License to Kill* (Glen, 1984), *Die Another Day* (Tamahori, 2002),[37] however in the fiction of the game, these events are reengineered such that Bond is played by the contemporary actor Daniel Craig,[38] and the internal fictional time period in which these events take place are between the end of *Quantum of Solace* (Forster, 2008) and *Skyfall* (2012). Just as Daniel Kleinman's title sequence represents Bond's dream-state for *Skyfall* as he's underwater, *007 Legends* is an alternate manifestation of Bond's psyche.

Wolf (2012b) describes a fifth sequence element:

> While an *intraquel* fills a gap that occurs within a particular work, we can invert the relationship and suggest a sequence element that does just the opposite, one which includes an already existing element (or elements) within itself, as if those preceding elements were filling gaps within it. Such an element, which would take place before, during, and after a previously-released sequence element (or elements), could be called a *transquel*. Such a work is typically broad in scope, setting other stories into a larger historical context and framework. (p. 209)

Wolf asserts that transquels are the rarest of sequence elements, and if they do appear, this occurs late in a franchise's life cycle. The function of the transquel is to provide a larger-scale framework into which existing narratives are located. While an intraquel zooms in to a particular period in one work's narrative timeline and expands it, the transquel zooms out to reveal the wider interconnections between existing works. This is achieved by condensing and highlighting particular narrative events which when viewed from a macro perspective take on a new meaning and significance in the broader

[37] Bond author Bruce Feirstein sheds light on the licensor's approach to the game design: "Because it was the 50th anniversary of James Bond, Activision and Danjaq decided that it was time to celebrate all of the movies" (Gaudiosi, 2012), thus events of the game represent a kind of "best of" highlights package of Bond's missions.

[38] *007 Legends* uses a similar reimagining technique in the 2010 remake of *GoldenEye 007* for the Nintendo Wii.

context of the series. A transquel may exhibit an encyclopaedic function, cataloguing and drawing connections between characters, story events and thematic concerns at the level of omniscient narration.

A game that exhibits some but not all of the qualities of the transquel would be *Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader* (LucasArts, 2001) for the Nintendo GameCube, since the game's missions encompass many of the major battles from the three original trilogy films, however it doesn't extend beyond the events of all the films. Another example within the *Star Wars* franchise is *LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga*, which is a combination of *LEGO Star Wars: The Videogame* (LucasArts, 2005) and *LSWII*, as they both cover the events of more than one film. Similarly, the "Pandorapedia" in *James Cameron's Avatar: The Game* exhibits the cataloguing function of the transquel; since it exists diegetically in-game, it does not present this information from an external narrational position and therefore the game cannot be considered a type of transquel.

Wolf (2012b) explains his final sequence element permutation as:

> One which runs in tandem (simultaneously) with an existing element or elements (or part of an element), which we might call a *paraquel*. Within a work, the same events are sometimes seen from the perspectives of different characters: the paraquel is an entire work covering the same events or period in time from a different perspective. (p. 210)

The concept of the paraquel sequence element aligns with the Intersection Model of film-to-game adaptation. This is akin to a shift in narrative viewpoint or perspective, commonly employed as a narrational strategy within an individual work, while a paraquel employs this change in viewpoint or perspective to encompass an entire work from the new perspective. *Robert Ludlum's: The Bourne Conspiracy* exhibits the characteristics of the paraquel in that the game includes moments from the film *The Bourne Identity* (Liman, 2002) as well as inventing new missions incorporated through flashbacks which diverge from the source films and novels (Nutt, 2008). In the case of both *The Godfather* and *Blade Runner* games, we see events of each of these films from

the viewpoint of the player who enacts a different character not existent in the source film.

A further useful distinction is Charles Renouvier's term "uchronia" which describes an unspecified or fictional time period in which a story is set, usually in the far future or distant past. Uchronia means no time and the word is patterned after utopia which means no place (Wolf, 2012b, pp. 95–96). This concept relates to the Extrapolation Model discussed in Chapter 4.

Additional Principles of Transmedia Storytelling and Relevance to this Study

For the purposes of this thesis the concepts of spreadability and drillability do not lend necessary insight in the context of the theorisation of film-to-game remediation. These are factors dependent upon audience behaviours and the subsequent circulation of meaning surrounding the transmedial property, therefore they are beyond the scope of the analysis as they are primarily concerned with the nature of social logics and practices of audiences. Audiences are only considered in terms of the case studies' contextual analysis which is comprised of developer accounts, critical reception and player impression in an effort to contemplate conditions of production and provide a general understanding of the game's reception. As with spreadability and drillability, the principle of performance deals with the cultural logics of audience engagement and therefore is beyond the core scope of this thesis.

Transmedia Storytelling and Adaptation Differentiation

Jenkins argues that a fundamental conceptual difference exists between adaptation and transmedia storytelling:

> We need to distinguish between adaptation, which reproduces the original narrative with minimum changes into a new medium and is essentially redundant to the original work, and extension, which expands our understanding of the original by introducing new elements into the fiction. Of course, this is a matter of degree—since any good adaptation contributes new insights into our

> understanding of the work and makes additions or omissions which reshape the story in significant ways. (Jenkins, 2009e)

Jenkins frequently uses the term "expansion" to differentiate adaptation from transmedia storytelling, in that a transmedial narrative expands the understanding of the property by virtue of "additive comprehension." Similarly, Beddows considers Dena's views on the significance of a property's movement between media formats:

> According to Dena (2009), any distribution across space (beyond the singular form) encompasses intra-medium expansion. That is: whilst any expansion beyond the singular can happen *within* what she terms a media platform (such as the use of multiple websites in an online experience) transmedia storytelling is characterised by movement *across* media platforms. She claims, "Any movement away from the notion of the singular is significant, but a subset of this idea—the practice of expressing a (fictional) world across distinct media—is an under recognised phenomenon." (Dena cited in Beddows, 2012, pp. 12–13)

Dena (2009) interrogates Jenkins's contention that adaptation is not transmedia storytelling. She argues against the idea of narrative redundancy as proposed by Jenkins when considering adaptation versus transmedia storytelling: "there is not a one-to-one correspondence of the story; and of course, the experience of each medium is entirely different" (p. 154). Dena cites Long (2007) in his analysis of the transmedia strategies at work at the Jim Henson Company surrounding the *Labyrinth* and *Dark Crystal* franchises: "retelling a story in a different media type is adaptation, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is transmediation" (Long cited in Dena, 2007, p. 22). Dena argues that adaption and transmedia are not mutually exclusive by pointing out that the transition between media dictates fresh perspectives and unique imaginings of the original work. Jenkins responds to Dena's argument by attempting to find a middle ground: "It might be better to think of adaptation and extension as part of a continuum in which both poles are only theoretical possibilities and most of the action takes place somewhere in the middle" (Jenkins, 2011). In Jenkins's book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006a) he considers the challenge presented by the transmedia format:

> [Electronic Arts game designer] Neil Young talks about "additive comprehension." He cites the example of the director's cut of *Blade Runner*, where adding a small segment showing Deckard discovering an origami unicorn invited viewers to question whether Deckard might be a replicant: "That changes your whole perception of the film, your perception of the ending… The challenge for us, especially with *The Lord of the Rings* is how do we deliver that one piece of information that makes you look at the films differently. (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 123)

Adaptation is a relatively restricted concept compared with transmedia storytelling: it exhibits a traditional refashioning of the text where there is a more direct text-to-text relationship. Jenkins distils the crucial difference between the two terms:

> A simple adaptation may be "transmedia" but it is not "transmedia storytelling" because it is simply re-presenting an existing story rather than expanding and annotating the fictional world. Of course, this distinction assumes a pretty straightforward adaptation. Every adaption makes additions—minor or otherwise—and reinterpretations of the original which in theory expands our understanding of the core story. These changes can be read as "infidelities" by purists but they may also represent what I describe in *Convergence Culture* as "additive comprehension"—they may significantly reshape our understanding of what's happening in the original work. Still, I think there is a distinction to be made between "extensions" to the core narrative or the fictional universe and adaptations which simply move content from one medium to another. (Jenkins, 2009a)

Wolf also considers the term "adaptation" when making a distinct differentiation between "adaptation" and "growth." Wolf (2012b) claims that a world can become transmedial in two ways:

> *Adaptation,* when a story existing in one medium is adapted for presentation in another medium, but without adding any new canonical material to a world… and *growth*, when another medium is used to present new canonical material of a world, expanding the world and what we know about it." (pp. 245–46)

Thus Wolf considers both adaptation and growth to be transmedial terms and concepts, which are not bound solely to narrative confines:

> The growth and adaptation of a world, however, goes beyond narrative, and may even have very little to do with narrative. Some degree of a world's aesthetics (the sensory experience of a world) and a world's logic (how a world operates and the reasons behind the way it is structured) must be carried over from one world to another, or from one medium to another. (p. 246)

Similarly, as Jenkins (2011) indicates, transmediality is composed of many logics: "transmedia storytelling described one logic of thinking about the flow of content across media. We might also think about transmedia branding, transmedia performance, transmedia ritual, transmedia play, transmedia activism, and transmedia spectacle, as other logics" (n.p.).

Process of Transformation

Wolf (2012b) identifies five processes of transformation (Table 3) which apply to both adaptation and transmedia storytelling: description, visualisation, auralisation, interactivation and deinteractivation (pp. 250–264). These processes describe such transformation as:

Description	The process of adapting any work into literature, which means describing the imaginary world (as opposed to depicting an enactment of the world, as a film might).
Visualisation	The process of adapting any work into visual media. This does not refer only to films, as book illustrations also do this, and of course so do video games.
Auralisation	The process of adapting any work into aural media. Again, sound plays a role in multiple media such as films and video games, but the key emphasis here is on media that concentrate on audio (e.g. radio plays).
Interactivation	The process of adapting any work into interactive media, by adding an element of interactivity to it.
Deinteractivation	The process of adapting any interactive work into other media, by removing interactivity from it.

Table 3. Wolf's processes of transformation

Aside from film, videogames have interactivated other media forms such as literature (Krzywinska, 2009). Booth (2015) posits a concept similar to Wolf's process of interactivation in his analysis of contemporary designed board games[39] which he terms ludic interaction: "A ludic interaction demonstrates not the copying of a narrative from one medium to another, but rather the transference of a particular identification across a ludic landscape" (p. 175). Booth advances a series of principles of paratextual board games, one of which applies to adaptations: "When seen as strict adaptations, paratextual board games close off interpretation of the media text; when seen as ludic interaction, they open up player dialogue with the media text" (p. 176). Booth considers that licensed board games require ludic interaction on the part of board game players that he sees as distinct from the ludic adaptation that takes place with licensed videogames. The nature of board games requires what Booth refers to as "imaginative ludic interaction" (p. 181), as board games do not possess several formal features inherent to videogames—namely representational cut-scenes—necessitating an imaginative dimension on the part of players.

[39] Booth refers to these as "paratextual board games."

Transmedia and Film-To-Game Adaptation

This section attempts a reconciliation of the two concepts of transmedia and adaptation in terms of film-to-game creative practice, interrogating existing work on film-to-game adaptation and synthesising selected theoretical adaptation notions along with relevant aspects of transmedia storytelling. This works to inform the series of models of film-to-game adaptation presented in the thesis, which are sensitive to each medium's form and narrative mechanics, in addition to the non-linear narrative structure of games, spatial storytelling and contextual elements.

Very little direct film-to-game adaptation theorisation exists within adaptation studies. Hutcheon (2013) mentions videogames through her book but does not investigate formal strategies or particular case studies. Significant scholarship on videogame adaptation mainly resides within game studies itself.

Brown and Krzywinska (2009) chart the history of movie games from the earliest instances to media convergence, with a focus on the significance of the concept of fidelity in adaptation, and investigate *GoldenEye 007* and *Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie* as exemplars of film-to-game adaptation. Bogost (2006) discusses film-to-game adaptation in light of licensing paradigms (pp. 173–180) using the examples of EA's *Harry Potter* games. Bogost considers movie-licensed games as "illustrative and / or associative advertisements" (p. 175) that employ gameplay strategies for the game adaptation to go beyond replicating the licensed film's scenes or characters.

As previously stated, a majority of the scholarship exists in the form of particular case study analyses of individual games.[40] Major contributions to the question of videogame adaptation have been addressed in the work of Brookey, Elkington, and Hall. In Brookey's (2010) book length study of various instances of film and other media-to-game adaptation, he very briefly mentions three modes of adaptation:

[40] See Atkins (2005a, 2005b), Brookey & Booth (2006), Burill (2002), Carr, Campbell, & Ellwood (2006), Crogan (2004), Fernández-Vara (2016), Krzywinska (2003), Thompson (2007), and Wallin (2007).

> Video game spin-offs parallel, intersect and extend film narratives in a variety of ways. Some even reflect actual scenes from the original film, as in the *LR/RK* [*The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*] video game, in which gameplay is digitally mapped onto scenes from the film. Other games tell an alternative narrative that parallels and intersects with the narrative of the film, such as the story of Sora, the main character in Disney's *Kingdom Hearts* video games. In these games, Sora's efforts to return home require him to help many characters from different Disney productions (Hercules and Tarzan, for example), so his story intersects with their narratives and the original films. Finally, some video games reference narratives that serve as source material for theatrical films: in the *Spider-Man* games, characters from the films appear, as do characters that are found only in the comic books, positioning the games as points of connection between the films' narratives and the original source material. (pp. 25–26)

Brookey's descriptions of models of adaptation are in turn drawn from existing studies in textual adaptation. Whilst brief, this is a key insight to the main trends of film-to-game adaptation with regard to this current study, as it draws directly from these ideas in theorising film-to-game remediation.

As part of his substantial investigation into the topic of film-to-game translations, Stefan Hall determines a typology of film-to-game licenses. Hall (2011) considers "the position of the game in relation to the narrative of the film" (p. 40) thereby creating three categories. This thesis also draws on Hall's typologies in the construction of the models employed in this study. Hall's (2011) first category is "products expressly tied to one film's narrative" in which games "follow the narrative of the film, either in its entirety or key scenes, and allow the user to move principal characters through recreated sets and action sequences" (p. 40). This can be seen as akin to Reflection Model adaptation (Chapter 6). Hall's second category is "products that function as sequels, prequels, or parallel / alternate narratives (sometimes using dominant points established by films)" (p. 42). This category can be seen to align with Intersection (Chapter 7) and Extension Model (Chapter 8) adaptation. Hall's third category is "products in milieu established or created by film, but not expressly related to established filmic narrative" (p. 43), and is covered under the idea of Extrapolation Model (Chapter 4) adaptation in

this thesis. It can be seen that Hall and Brookey are both privileging internarrative theory in the way that they consider film-to-game transmediality.

Elkington (2009) also considers three approaches to film-to-game adaptation, identifying the most common form as 'direct adaptation' where the game "follows the film narrative by directly turning the film events into interactive experiences" (p. 219). The second type he refers to is Jenkins's transmedia storytelling, where each media product contributes to an overall narrative world (p. 220). Here Elkington cites *Enter the Matrix* as a problematic example in addition to considering *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* (EA, 2004) as a positive example of transmedia storytelling, in which: "characters at times intersect with film events, providing the larger picture of what happened before, elsewhere, or after the heroes of the movies pursue their quest" (p. 220). Elkington's third category is termed "expansion" and refers to "a separate narrative not directly reliant upon film events" (p. 221).

Certain film-to-game adaptation models, while being transmedial in nature, can be seen to exemplify more of a traditional notion of adaptation (as in the case of Reflection Model adaptation and to a lesser extent Intersection Model adaptation). However, we must be sensitive to methods by which the game hypertext comments on or inflects the film, as its transmedia condition may shed light on its model of adaptation. The Extension Model and the Extrapolation Model, by virtue of their seriality and internarrative characteristics, exhibit transmedia storytelling, whereas the Reflection and Intersection Models are more closely aligned with adaptation strategies and therefore comparative narrative form.

Brown and Krzywinska (2009) discuss the concept of interactivity as the primary determining factor for understanding adaptation in textual videogame adaptation. Schulzke also considers the significance of this notion in relation to film-to-game adaptation:

> Video games rely on a distinct form of participatory interactivity that is much different from the interpretive interactivity of books and movies. Each form of interactivity is essential to the media it is associated with, but they are present in varying degrees depending on the openness of a game or the complexity of a book

> or film. Although a text may incorporate both forms of interactivity, one is always privileged, making the line dividing the two forms of interactivity very difficult to cross. The central challenge in adapting between games and other media is making the changes necessary to create a text that is good by the standards of a different mode of interactivity. Games based on other media may borrow heavily from their source material, even to the extent that their narratives are unoriginal, but they must deviate from the source material enough to allow players to participate in the game world. (Schulzke, 2013, Section 6, para. 1)

Game scholars have analysed a wide range of videogames based on feature films in light of the strategies and techniques employed in film-to-game adaptation. Some of the most notable examples include Barry Atkins (2005a, 2005b) on *The Lord of the Rings* and *Blade Runner*, Jessica Aldred (2012a, 2014) on early adaptations and the Traveller's Tales LEGO videogames and Diane Carr et al (2006) and Patrick Crogan (2004) on *The Thing*, and Fernández-Vara (2016) on *Blade Runner*. Several scholars have also analysed the contextual position and function of licensed games with respect to industrial issues, such as Steve Elkington (2005, 2009, 2012) and Stefan Hall (2011).

The central question in any adaptation analysis is "what exactly is being adapted?" When we speak of "the property," what is this: The title, the series title, iconic characters, the world, a particular mood? Much adaptation theory has delved into the notion of the "essence" of a work; but how does one distil an essence? And how does one determine if that essence has in fact been adapted, either successfully or unsuccessfully? With relation to textual adaptation in to a game, is there an analogue for ludological factors in film form? Hutcheon (2006) describes three modes of engagement with media: telling (dealing with novels), showing (dealing with plays and films) and interacting (dealing with videogames) (pp. 22-27). Hutcheon (2006) argues that the most significant factor for video game adaptation is the adapted heterocosm, meaning, the world of the game:

> What gets adapted here is a heterocosm, literally an "other world" or cosmos, complete, of course, with the stuff of a story—settings, characters, events, and situations. To be more precise, it is the "*res extensa*"—to use Descartes' terminology—of that world, its material, physical dimension, which is transposed

> and then experienced through multisensorial interactivity (Grau 2003: 3). This heterocosm possesses what theorists call "truth-of-coherence" (Ruthven 1979: 11)—here, plausibility and consistency of movement and graphics within the context of the game (Ward 2002: 129)—just as do narrated and performed worlds, but this world also has a particular kind of "truth-of correspondence"—not to any "real world" but to the universe of a particular adapted text. (p. 14)

Due to the participatory nature of interactivity in videogames, the way in which a player experiences the world of a game triggers a different kind of sensation of engagement. Hutcheon (2006) eludicates: "The heterocosm of film is experienced in a game in a more intense form of 'vicarious kinesthesia' and with a feeling of sensory presence (Darley 2000: 152)" (p. 51).

Aarseth (2006) considers parameters set out by David Alpert and Rick Jacobs (2004) when looking for suitable translatable attributes in the context of film-to-game adaptation. They propose three traits to look for: 1) Iconic characters with high recognition value, 2) an interesting universe, and 3) a "high concept" that would translate into a gameplay mechanic, (p. 209). Aarseth (2006) states: "If you have all three, you may be able to make an interesting game, but it is still difficult. What is lacking from this formula, of course, is story. Partly because you don't really need it, if you have these three key ingredients" (p. 209). Here Aarseth is referring to the difficulty in integrating a traditional Aristotelian conception of story into a videogame format.

The process of novelisation (film-to-novel being the most common form) shares certain characteristics of adaptation with film-to-game adaptation. Stackpole (2013) attempts to reclaim the cultural status of the novelisation by providing a personal account of his work on various properties such as the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* franchises. Traditionally, novelisations are seen as low cultural artefacts and work for hire projects. He sees novelisations as a category of adaptation, the source text normally being a film, television show or graphic novel, or videogame. Stackpole details the contractual relationship between authors and license holders and the process of novelising a source work. He then talks about elaborations—"works that expand and further develop a property" (p. 216). Elaborations can be broken down into two categories—expansion and interstitial:

> Expansion work uses the canonical material as a starting point with an open end. The conclusion of an expansion work is not determined by anything in the licensor-owned canon. Interstitial works, by contrast occupy a space in the property which is manifestly defined by core canonical events. The works set the stage for or bridge between events. (p. 217)

Stackpole's experience in writing novelisations and elaborations are directly akin to the development of film-to-game adaptations because he sees them as a type of adaptation.

Bogost (2007) defines "procedural rhetoric" as "the practice of authoring arguments through process" (p. 239), and creates an extension of this with what he terms "procedural translation": "the practice of authoring rules and systems dynamics in such ways that they model the situational logics implied by texts from other media" (p. 239). Weise (2009) posits a variation on Bogost's "procedural translation" with what he terms "procedural adaptation." Weise sees this process as a creative activity and so uses the term "adaptation" over "translation." In a discussion of the videogame adaptation of John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982), Weise (2009) identifies *The Thing* (2002) as an example of "what procedural adaptation is in the world of commercial game development" (p. 240). He identifies that due to the ways in which *The Thing* (2002) incorporates key themes from the film in its rules systems, it is a game that uses "both ludic and representational elements to adapt a text from another medium, yet do[es] so in a way in which the removal of the ludic elements would cause a game's identity as an adaptation to evaporate" (p. 240). Weise's concept of procedural adaptation is akin to Wolf's process of interactivation.

As Wolf (2012b) states: "To create their mediated experiences, every medium makes use of one or more basic elements: words, images, sounds, and interactions" (p. 248). These sensory registers flow from hypotext to hypertext dependent on the media involved. In terms of issues of film-to-game adaptation, the experiential dimension primarily manifests itself via interactivation as the question of how a non-interactive text is adapted into an interactive one revolves around the concept of agency. In this thesis, the ludological core of videogames is foregrounded and thus it considers how

interactivation is generated by game genre and mechanics,[41] as well as world-building and Jenkins's concept of environmental storytelling. As Wolf (2012b) argues, interactivation does not stand alone: "interactivation cannot be present by itself: it requires words, images, sounds, or physical objects (like a playset), or some combination of them, in order for interactivity to be possible, as such, some description, visualisation, or auralisation is required as a prerequisite to interactivation" (p. 260).

A study conducted on *The Lord of the Rings Online* (Turbine, 2007) describes this process of transformation:

> Players need to be able to step into the world of the adapted story and spend a significant amount of time in that world, exploring its many locations and engaging with the characters and objects drawn from or even simply suggested by the source text. In addition, to meet the same requirements of long-term immersive player involvement, videogame adaptations must expand the scope of the original story, allowing players to meet added characters performing added tasks and fitting into added plots and subplots. They must allow players to explore what is happening in that world beyond the scope of the storyline presented in the source. (Randall & Murphy in Wolf, 2012b, p. 261)

As indicated, additive comprehension is a determining factor of transmedia franchises. Ways in which additive comprehension can be operationalized through the movie-licensed game include added character comprehension and invented character comprehension. Added character comprehension involves taking a minor character from the film and making them the playable character in the game, allowing motivations, relationships, backstory of that character which may be absent from the film to be made manifest within the game. Invented character comprehension, on the other hand, uses the addition adaptation strategy to incorporate an entirely invented character, so that the player's additive comprehension may exist in the realm of understanding more about the story world, or alternatively, if that invented character interacts with existing

[41] Layering the Quick Time Event (QTE) mechanic from David Cage's noir thriller *Heavy Rain* over footage from David Fincher's similarly styled *Se7en* (1995) demonstrates, albeit with a comical tone, how interactivation may be deployed in a nod to FMV games of the 1990s (http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xcfazc).

characters, the player may learn more about the nature of the existing characters from the film. Aldred (2014) articulates an important idea regarding the challenge of shifting a character from a movie and recreating her as a playable character in a movie-licensed game: "they must function as 'doubled avatars,' striking a different balance between being effective player surrogates, as well as accurate stand-ins for their cinematic source material" (p. 106). This is akin to a type of displacement whereby the player encounters an uncanny resemblance of a filmic space within a game space.

Dena (2009) argues against the idea of narrative redundancy as proposed by Jenkins when considering adaptation versus transmedia storytelling, as she sees there can never be a mirrored reflection of the story told in different media, given that the experience of the story in a particular medium can never be identical to another. She cites Aarseth to emphasise the more complicated nature of this shift from a narrative source into a game adaptation: "As Aarseth explains, you 'can transfer characters (up to a point) and universes (unproblematically), and any kind of action gimmick such as bullet time; but for games to work, gameplay, not story, is key'" (Aarseth in Dena, 2009, p. 154). Taking this idea further, Dena states: "The argument that narratives travel across media, including games, therefore ignores the reality of the peculiar nature of narrative and game modes… the view that narratives are easily transferable to game modes is perhaps why so many game adaptations have failed" (Dena, 2009, p. 155). Dena goes on to cite Aarseth's somewhat humorous table (Table 4) which attempts to categorise the problematic process of transferring certain elements from one medium to another.

Element	Ride to movie	Book to movie	Movie to game	Game to movie
Storyline	No	Ok	Not really	No
Events	Hardly	Ok	Hardly	Ok
Universe	Ok	Ok	Ok	Ok
Character	No	Ok	Partly	Expanded

Table 4. Aarseth's "Crossmedia Transfer Table" Source: Aarseth in Dena (2009, p. 155)

Recently a slew of handbooks to creating transmedia properties have emerged aimed at transmedia producers—a leading source is Focal Press's *Storytelling Across Worlds:*

Transmedia for Creatives and Producers (Fry et al., 2013). However, the chapter on videogames and interactive storytelling is underdeveloped, with no practical insight into film-to-game adaptations, other than mentioning successful examples (such as *GoldenEye 007*) and offering generalities surrounding the importance of teamwork, or simplistic statements along the lines of "games take time to make, give the developer time to make it" (pp. 190–91). Within a 300-page manual one would expect an attempt to understand the processes involved, some kind of concrete strategy or at least a consideration into how one can avoid making a bad film-to-game adaptation, but this is not the case—essentially the process is boiled down to: if you have a good film, you *may* make a good adaptation. Film-to-game adaptation is a complicated alchemy and indeed an investigation into the mysterious journey from film to game is a worthwhile notion. Some other writers grapple with these questions with similarly little outcome: Davidson (2010a) considers the position of games in relation to transmedia,[42] where Franco (2011) deals more extensively with these ideas but in relation to the specific process of adaptation from book-to-tv series to multiplayer online game in a study on the *Muddle Earth* intellectual property, and how the game was shaped by a series of hypertextual, intertextual, and extratextual processes. More worthwhile is Long's (2009) seminar *Play Chapter: Video Games and Transmedia Storytelling*, where he outlines significant characteristics of how games have been part of existing transmedia storytelling franchises and considers what can be learned from them.

In this chapter I have articulated key concepts and strategies of adaptation, considering the central position fidelity plays in traditional models of adaptation and which is treated in various ways in the case study analyses. I have explicated the relationship and differentiation of adaptation and transmediality and argued how the aesthetics of transmedia—in particular, continuity, world-building, and seriality—relate to film-to-game adaptation. These factors are the basis of the textual analyses contained within the cases studies. Chapter 3 moves on to investigate the nature of licensing and franchising within the intersection of film production and game development, considering the industrial factors that lead to the challenges involved in film-to-game adaptation practice throughout game history.

[42] Or in his terminology, "cross-media communications."

Chapter 3.

Film-To-Game Adaptation:

Industrial and Historical Contexts

This chapter outlines the industrial conditions surrounding development and publishing in film-to-game adaptation. It is clear that the concept of media convergence is of foremost significance to the growing relationship between the film and games industry, which has been operationalised by franchising and licensing practices. This chapter also includes a brief historical survey of movie-licensed games, focusing on four periods throughout game history, which situates film-to-game adaptations with regard to trends and progression in commercial videogame practice.

King and Krzywinska (2002a) identify industrial aspects in some of the earliest academic writing on the interconnections between films and videogames: "some of the key producers and distributors of both forms of entertainment are located within the same media corporations and in which game spin-offs offer substantial additional revenues to the Hollywood studios" (p. 150). They go on to say that "the development and production process required by games has also come to take on some of the characteristics, and scale, of the film business" (p. 151). Moreover, Russell (2012) considers the respective regard the film and game industries have held for one another: "While the major motion picture studios have spent most of the last 30 years lazily trying to co-opt videogames, the videogame industry itself has been evolving into a real competitor in the entertainment business" (p. 3). This notion ties in with Tavinor's (2009) ideas about the degree of sophistication existent in videogames as storytelling media. Russell (2012) further reflects on the comparatively rapid advancement of videogame form: "Only 35 years separate *Pong* from *BioShock*, but in technological and artistic terms it's like comparing the 'still motion' of the 16,000-year-old Palaeolithic cave paintings at Lascaux with *The Bourne Supremacy*" (pp. 5-6).

It is estimated that 30% of films produced during the Classical Hollywood period—circa 1919–1960 (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson, 1985)—were adapted from novels and short stories (Ellis, 1982, p. 3). Comparatively in videogame history, Blanchet (2011) investigates the trends in film-to-game adaptation from 1975–2010:

> [During this period] 547 films shown in movie theatres gave rise to around 2,000 games. The practice of adaptation has grown over the last 35 years to become a major category in video game production today, accounting for nearly 10% of the total number of video games published. (n.p.)

More specifically, in analysing the number of simultaneous adaptations published per year, Blanchet (2011) identifies three distinct phases which show an increase in production for these particular adaptations:

> From 1975 to 1983, between one and four films per year gave rise to a simultaneous adaptation; from 1984 to 2001, the publication of simultaneous adaptations concerned on average a dozen films per year… since 2002, the average has exceeded 22 films per year. (n.p.)

However, since Blanchet's 2011 assessment, the industry took on a new perspective towards movie-licensed games, such that these releases have seen a decline as discussed later in this chapter.

The vast majority of movie-licensed games are commonly referred to as "ordinary," "mundane," "workman-like," "unremarkable;"[43] and a significant percentage have a reputation as "bad objects." There is also considerable audience disappointment in many cases.[44] Movie-licensed games are seen as "transparent attempts to cash in on successful movie franchises, with products that lack much in the way of compelling gameplay of their own" (King & Krzywinska, 2002b, p. 7). The concept of cashing in

[43] *Edge* magazine's review (2010) of *James Cameron's Avatar: The Game* states: "Quietly competent to the very end, *Avatar*'s certainly not the disaster you may have feared, but it can feel patronising, pompous and a little unnecessary" (p. 85).

[44] For instance, an article on the *Avatar* adaptation by games journalist Stephen Totilo is titled: "The Avatar Video Game Disappointment" (Totilo, 2010).

on brand recognition can be linked to the industrial reality that a vast majority of movie tie-in games are based on children's film licenses and therefore targeted towards child consumers, as evidenced by both Blanchet (2010) and Hall (2011).

Nichols (2014) considers the comparative scope of both industries in terms of revenue:

> It wasn't until 2008 when videogame software sales eclipsed North American film box office receipts. This does not include all of the other revenue streams from film (such as home video, cable sales). During the same period, video game software sales sit at about half of the global film box office. (p. 119)

Nichols's comparison dispels the long-held idea that the videogame industry has overtaken the film industry in terms of financial revenue. Nevertheless, the economic power of the games industry strengthens year on year (Brand, Todhunter, & Jervis, 2017, p. 31).

There are two kinds of applicable release schedules when considering movie-licensed games—"simultaneous" or "non-simultaneous" release. Blanchet (2011) defines simultaneous release to be less than 18 months between the release of the film and the appearance of the videogame, where a non-simultaneous release appears more than 18 months after the cinema release. The reason for this is that historically the period of time between the cinema exhibition window and home video or television release generally correlates to 18 months. Release windows have diminished considerably over the last 40 years such that in contemporary times a simultaneous release would equate to no more than couple of months, if not weeks, following the cinema release. Non-simultaneous releases can occur years, or even decades following the source film's release—as in the case of Electronic Arts *The Godfather: the Game*, with the release of the film in 1972, and the game adaptation not occurring until 2006.

Simultaneous release games fall under the category of "tie-ins" in the industry, to highlight their relationship with the film release. Tie-ins are generally considered a form of marketing and can take many guises including merchandising, through to soundtracks and novelisations (Wyatt, 1994, pp. 148–154). Some simultaneous game releases see the game released slightly earlier than the film due to contractual

arrangements. Film production always has primacy, where the game adaptation is seen as a minor offshoot, and there's a kind of prestige associated with the film that is always absent from the regard for the game. When faced with the necessity of hitting a deadline to coincide with the release of a theatrical film, the quality of the game adaptation is invariably sacrificed (Remo, 2010).

Blanchet's (2011) results show that of all film-to-game adaptations, 90% are simultaneous releases. A prime reason for this approach is for publishers to capitalise on the massive marketing, publicity and advertising campaigns accompanying Hollywood mainstream releases. To quote Thompson (2007):

> Skaggs [executive producer of the 2004 game *The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-earth*] calls this double duty use of publicity "the whole franchise effect": "all the marketing and advertising and everything hits for the films, and people walk into the store, Best Buy or something, and they go, 'Oh, look, there's the thing I just saw advertised a thousand times on TV or in the movies. Wow, I want it!'" (p. 237)

High Concept

Many source films that are the basis of film-to-game adaptations fulfill the definition of "high concept." Justin Wyatt (1994) states that, "one can think of high concept as comprising: 'the look, the hook, and the book.' The look of the images, the marketing hooks, and the reduced narrative form the cornerstones of high concept" (p. 22). It may be suggested that the appearance of high concept films starting with *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975) had their roots in the exploitation films of the 1960s and 1970s. One may argue that there is a strong relationship between genre films and high concept, since genres such as science fiction and horror draw upon clear codes and conventions as shorthand, and it can be seen that likewise, many film-to-game adaptations draw from these film genres. In Hall's 2011 extensive survey of movie-licensed games, an overwhelming majority are drawn from genre films that would be considered high concept in nature. In support of this, Wyatt (1994) states that high concept films are conceived as marketable entities. One of the key defining characteristics of high concept in relation to film, is

that traditional notions of story may be distilled down to a single event that can be represented in a key art poster image. Wyatt says a high concept film is "a product differentiated through the emphasis on style in production and through the integration of the film with its marketing" (p. 20).

High concept films are the end products of macro shifts in not only the Hollywood film industry, but also the wider entertainment industries. Works such as *Global Hollywood* (Miller et al., 2001) and *Brand Hollywood* (Grainge, 2008) deal with the cultural economy of recent Hollywood, including issues of rights and branding as they apply to major corporate entertainment properties. Tino Balio (2013) updates these ideas in his recent publication *Hollywood in the New Millennium*, considering issues such as synergy, tent pole release, and comic book franchises: "The CEOs of the media companies are clear and unequivocal about what they want from their movie studios—more and bigger franchises that are instantly recognizable and exploitable across all platforms and all divisions of the company" (p. 25).

Licensing and Franchising

Johnson (2013) describes licensing as: "formalized practices of [industrial] collaboration" (p. 21). In the case of film-to-game adaptation, a license to use various aspects of a property is granted to a game developer—this may include a title, characters, story, or the world in which the source film takes place. A "licensed game" is a game based on an existing media property[45] where the owner of the copyright grants a license to a publisher or developer thereby allowing them rights to be able to create a game based on copyrighted elements (Russell, 2012, pp. 16–18). Licenses are generally not beholden or exclusive to a particular licensee, and a common strategy exists where the same license is regularly given to different developers over time, with continual renegotiations of license conditions. For example, since the release of the first Bond

[45] Jason Della Rocca (2007) sees licensed properties as either internal intellectual property or external intellectual property. He refers to games based on a property which were created initially as a videogame as internal IP, that is, internal to the games industry. Conversely, he refers to a game based on a property, such as a film, as external IP. Whilst a vast majority of game franchises are internal intellectual property, Nichols (2014) notes two franchises that can be cited as examples of long-running successful external IP beginning in the early 1990s and extending to today: the *Madden NFL* series and James Bond (p. 115).

gane in 1983 it has been licensed by many different developers across multiple platforms. Rabowsky (2009) articulates the economic industrial significance of licensing with respect to the videogame industry:

> Game publishing is a very risky enterprise. It tends to be a hit driven business, with only a few titles becoming big hits and selling millions of units, while many just break even or lose money. Licensing content from a third party ("licensor") can ameliorate some of the risk faced by games companies if the licensed content can provide a sizable fan base and brand awareness, and the licensor is putting a substantial marketing effort of its own behind the content. A license can sometimes also provide a creative boost for a game… From the perspective of the licensor, a game license can provide a nice ancillary revenue stream with no investment risk, and a new way to tell stories in the licensed property's universe. (Chapter 11, para. 2)

A typical game design textbook considers adapting licensed properties by negotiating various target audiences for the product—from general audiences, genre audiences, and core audiences of the property itself. Tanguay and Boylen suggest employing a three-pronged strategy to making games from licensed properties. Their strategies consist of: early identification of the spirit of the property and its "unique features," using a layering approach to appeal to various competencies, and thoughtful discretion in relation to what exactly to adapt and how to deal with licensors (Tanguay & Boylen in Laramee, 2002, pp. 126–133). These considerations, while true in the most general sense, offer little insight into the complex process of adapting licensed properties.

In practice, the licensing agreement between the license holder and the licensee may involve various restrictive conditions in terms of what is allowable in the videogame adaptation of a movie property. Paul O'Connor, design director of the licensed game *Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Conspiracy*, refers to these restrictive conditions as "guardrails" (Nutt, 2008). Rabowsky (2009) further articulates the notion of restrictive conditions by detailing three main considerations:

> A licensed property is originally designed for another medium, probably without any thought of how it would translate into games; (2) there may be preexisting

> fan expectations about how the property should be developed; and (3) the licensor often has a great deal of control over the creative process due to contractual approval rights. (Chapter 11, para. 4)

Nichols (2014) notes that due to the film industry being stronger, licensing deals are "lopsided" (p. 118), similarly, citing Grover et al. (2005), Nichols claims film studios expect US$3-5 million up front, plus 9% of the game's profits.

In many situations, a license holder (such as a Hollywood studio) may have their own game development arm or a game publishing arm (such as The Walt Disney Co. and Disney Interactive). In these cases, it may seem that a smoother development process is achievable, but in reality the film studio and the development arm are still separate corporate units, albeit under the same company umbrella. As Ramsay (2012) notes, Lucasfilm has a notorious reputation for being overly restrictive with the *Star Wars* license.[46] Fargus Urquhart (co-founder of Obsidian Entertainment) however, counters this assertion whilst discussing the licensing arrangement with LucasArts regarding his experience working on *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords* (LucasArts, 2004):

> Our experience with Lucasfilm was not [restrictive] at all. In the end, they really only asked us to change three or four things about the game. For example, they did not want us mucking around with Alderaan, and we had the horns on one of the races turned the wrong way. Now, the reason I think we were allowed more freedom is because of how we have always treated licenses. We look at a license as a privilege to play and develop in their worlds. We respect that privilege. We immerse ourselves in them and make sure we are doing everything right… Ultimately, the worlds and rules belong to the licensors. We may not agree with everything they've done, and we may even ask if we can change certain things. But their fans love it for what it is, not for how we can change it. (pp. 84–85)

[46] LucasFilm exacts a relatively high level of restriction over how the *Star Wars* license may be exploited in various media forms, and due to the voluminous complexity of the property's internal universe and continuity they have a dedicated division set aside to ensure the license is consistent with LucasFilm guidelines.

Here Urquhart points out that even with the same licensor, licensees will have different experiences and working relationships between projects. It can be surmised that the relationship is fluid and will depend on many factors.[47] In the case of *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords*, an allowance of freedom can be attributed to Obsidian's established reputation as a consistently reliable developer of high profile role-playing games. It is clear from this account that a mutual respect is evident in the licensee / licensor relationship, as well as a respect for the fandom associated with this particular license. However, this regard and respect for the process of creating a licensed game is not at all standard practice. As Rabowsky (2009) notes: "the industry's heavy reliance on licenses perpetuates a perception that the industry is somehow a bastard stepchild of other entertainment media with second-class citizen status, and results in a stifling of creativity" (Chapter 11, para. 3).

Film-to-game adaptation depends not only on the concept of licensing but also franchising. When considering the source films used in a majority of movie-licensed games, it can be clearly seen that many are part of a franchise, to which said tie-in game forms another avenue for exploiting the license. Johnson (2013) claims there are commonalities to be found when considering licensing and franchising. He considers the evolution of the term "franchising" and its significance to the creation of value in media industries:

> Prior to the 1980s, the term "franchise" held two primary meanings: first, the right to vote and exercise agency as the subject of an institution; and second, a retail operation (like McDonald's) in which independent operators in local markets paid a license fee for the right to conduct ongoing business under a shared, corporate trademark. In the last 30 years, however, franchising took on a third cultural significance… to explain the multiplied replication of culture from intellectual property resources… If the retail industries made networks of cooperating outlets legible as "franchising," the later emergence of media franchising implied a new

[47] In the case of the first game adapted from *The Fast and the Furious* franchise (2001–present)—an arcade racing game titled *The Fast and the Furious* (Raw Thrills, 2004)—the publishers of the console port, Midway Games, lost the license during the process of the game's production. After extracting the few elements associated with the film, the game was released as *Cruis'n* (2007). Ironically, the 2004 arcade game was simply a game in the *Cruis'n* (Midway Games, 1994–present) series with incidental features added to take advantage of the film's title. See Navarro (2007).

> way of thinking about networks of collaborative content production constituted across multiple industrial sites. To adapt a basic definition from Robert Iger, who as president and CEO led Disney's embrace of the strategy since 1999, the franchising of media content production came to be understood as "something that creates value across multiple businesses and across multiple territories over a long period of time." (p. 6)

Thompson (2007) describes a key reason for franchise exploitation, namely, the possibility of supplementary commercial revenues:

> People use the term "franchise" rather loosely in relation to films. Essentially, it means a movie that spawns additional revenue streams beyond what it earns from various forms of distribution, primarily theatrical, video and television. These streams may come from sequels and series or from the production company licensing other firms to make ancillary products: action figures, video games, coffee mugs, T-Shirts and the hundreds of other items that licensees conceive of. In the ideal franchise, they come from both. (p. 4).

She goes on to say:

> Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975) may have set the pattern of the blockbuster event film that spawns sequels (in 1978, in 1983 and in 1987), but it did not generate much of a franchise on the merchandising front. George Lucas took the next step. He persuaded 20th Century Fox to compensate him for his direction of *Star Wars* (1977) by granting him the licensing rights… These *Star Wars* series became the model of how to create a franchise by linking films and related merchandise. (p. 4).

The two well-known examples used here by Thompson are germane to the argument as they are archetypical high concept films.

More recently, the terms franchise and transmedia have been employed to describe a similar space. As Jenkins (2011) points out, various commentators consider transmedia to be just another term for franchising. However, Jenkins makes a distinct conceptual

separation between these two terms: “Most previous media franchises were based on reproduction and redundancy, but transmedia represents a structure based on the further development of the storyworld through each new medium” (n.p.). Jenkins’s designation is difficult to discern in practice as the term “transmedia franchise” is somewhat prevalent in contemporary discourse surrounding franchises and licensing.

Platforms for Profit Generation

Marketing industry figures espouse the potential of licensing. A typical industry observation reads:

> Strong IP and highly recognizable characters are the current driving force of the video game industry. Whether a game is mobile or console-based, the right IP or character can open the door to an evolving licensing program and turn a game into a lifestyle brand. (McKinney, 2014, p. 25)

How exactly a license becomes a “lifestyle brand” is nebulous at best, and this type of hyped language is indicative of industry discourse.

Film-to-game adaptations are primarily considered platforms for profit generation, rather than valuable contributions to the textuality of a franchise. King and Krzywinska (2002a) note, “whether licensing deals for film tie-ins are negotiated in-house or with outside developers, games represent a significant source of profits for the studios” (p. 150). “It’s only a videogame spin-off” is an oft-used phrase connoting a lack of significance. Game scholar Stefan Hall (2011) points out that:

> In the early days of video games, it was not uncommon to have games in development or already completed to be rebranded to exploit a film license (Twentieth Century Fox single-handedly set this precedent). Unfortunately, the connections between most of these games and their sources were often specious at best and resulted in film-to-game adaptations being saddled with negative expectations that have remained over the years. (footnote 57, p. 41)

Generally, the videogame tie-in is not the first audience "access point" into a franchise, thus movie-licensed games work on the notion that audiences who have experienced the film may then wish to engage with the game tie-in. Whilst the positive reception of a film may lead to engagement with the game, a conversely negative experience with the licensed game may then cause audiences to cease interest in the franchise altogether. However, in the past, audiences have considered the game adaptation more akin to a type of merchandising rather than a crucial extension of the core concerns of the source film.

In an interview with Henry Jenkins, Neil Young (head of *The Lord of the Rings* franchise for EA) expressed his desire to change the movie-licensed game's cultural position:

> I wanted to adapt Peter's work for our medium in the same way that he has adapted Tolkien's work for his. Rather than being some derivative piece of merchandise along the same continuum with the poster, the pen, the mug or the keychain, maybe we could turn that pyramid up the side of its head, leverage those pieces which have come before, and become the pinnacle of the property instead of the basement. (2006a, p. 107)

This idea of value beyond marketing is considered in one of the most extensive investigations of a recent media franchise—Kristin Thompson's (2007) closely researched work on *The Lord of the Rings* film franchise—which includes a discussion of the Electronic Arts game adaptations. Thompson argues that the existence of the videogames based on Peter Jackson's version of *The Lord of the Rings* is due in part to the technological convergence of contemporary media industries (pp. 224–253). This case shows that leading auteur filmmakers involved in world-building have the opportunity to coordinate significant entries in the franchise outside of "the mother ship," to use Jenkins's phrase regarding the transmedia source property.

In the mid 2000s Jenkins perceived a change in attitude in the Hollywood media industries: that licensed products are not simply seen as cheap spin-offs, but are part of an integrated media ecosystem, citing examples like *The Matrix, Enter the Matrix*, and

The Lord of the Rings videogames. However, in the following years, this perceived shift has not eventuated to the extent that Jenkins envisaged, as Aldred (2014) explains:

> While the much-hyped technological convergence of cinema and games has prompted certain idealistic predictions that fictional characters should now be able to "flow" seamlessly across media platforms with relative ease for both producers and consumers, the reality has been far more complicated. (p. 105).

Film Production / Game Development

Blanchet's (2011) study shows that nine out of ten film-to-game adaptations are based on Hollywood productions, which demonstrates the clear dominance of Hollywood high concept and branded franchises with respect to this type of adaptation. Michel Ancel, lead designer of *Peter Jackson's King Kong* (2005) elucidates the main practical challenge presented in simultaneous release scenarios: "Because of the time and budget constraints with game licenses, it's hard to take risks and innovate" ("King Kong's Michel Ancel," 2006, n.p.).

Traditionally, movie-licensed games suffer from rushed development schedules (Elkington, 2009) primarily due to the need to coordinate a simultaneous release with the source film (discussed in the following section of this chapter). In perhaps the most well-known account of a restricted development time-frame, Howard Scott Warshaw, the programmer of *E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial* (Atari, 1982) was given only five weeks to design, programme and manufacture the game (Russell, 2012, p. 36).

Alternatively, close coordination between production and development can lead to a positive outcome as in the case of the intrinsically excellent simultaneous release game *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure* (LucasArts, 1989). Here, due to the close working relationship of director Steven Spielberg and producer George Lucas with designer Ron Gilbert and the Games Division of LucasArts, the point-and-click adventure tie-in game was able to be developed alongside the shooting script of the film, even allowing for scenes to appear in the game that were eventually cut from the film during post-production (Smith, 2008, pp. 42–43). Similarly, the LucasArts in-

house creation of *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*, the sequel game to the film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, resulted in one of the greatest adventure games ever made (Russell, 2012, pp. 183–185).

The nature of simultaneous adaptation means that when frequently occurring film production changes happen, there are often systemic ramifications to the game production. Thompson (2007) points out that in the case of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Peter Jackson had enormous control. Due to the changing nature of the script and issues surrounding the game development time-frame versus the film's production, Jackson was co-producer, co-writer, director, and was able to make sometimes relatively major changes at late stages of production. Once committed to working on a particular sequence in the game adaptation, game developers were unable to abandon work on this sequence which was subsequently dropped from the final cut of the film. The nature of large-scale game development means not only is it difficult to accommodate changes during post-production, often changes during principal photography may not be able to be implemented.

The Lord of the Rings co-producer Rick Porras, who helped coordinate the film team's contributions to *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (EA, 2003) videogame, describes the practical difficulties discovered when collaborating with EA whilst still in production of the film:

> Understandably, they're wanting to get their hands on as much as possible. So it was a tough thing for us, because on the one hand we wanted the games to be as great as possible, because we love games, and it's exciting for a good game to be out there, and let's face it, it doesn't hurt. If anything, it helps future ticket sales on the films. But, on the flipside, it was definitely yet another taxing thing… on [writer director] Peter [Jackson]'s plate. (as cited in Thompson, 2007, p. 239)

A reverse scenario of this relationship can be seen when a game sets out to create strong ties with the original license:

> "One of our goals from the beginning was not to make a 'movie game,'" Bob Roberts, lead designer on *Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor*, told Eurogamer. "Not

> to just rehash the same events over again. So, just trying to make the best game we can, and making it clear that this is its own thing—its own story, its own experience." There were no legal issues with the name, should Monolith have chosen to include it. But Roberts said his team wanted to make a self-contained game that will make sense for people who may or may not have been exposed to Tolkien's mythos before. (Mahardy, 2014, n.p.)

Aarseth (2006, p. 205) refers to two forms of cross-media production—synchronous and asynchronous, or "strong" and "weak." Cross-media productions that produce the media versions in parallel, and productions that take place sequentially, as a migration between media, and where the first instance usually is seen as the original content. At some point the latter becomes merely an adaptation, in which a work is translated from one medium to another, without any plan for such transfer at the time of first creation. The distinction between adaptation and cross-media production can be difficult to maintain, however, as works may have been planned with cross-media migration in mind, even though it didn't eventuate.

Property knowledge and fandom presents a double-edged sword from the developers' perspective in terms of adaptation.[48] Ensuring fidelity to the source material results in a restriction to creative decisions, as there is limited space to take the property in new direction—fans with a high level of property knowledge may consider canonicity a serious issue. For example, putting Han Solo in a disco[49] would break the "rules" of the property as fans know it, creating a discord with the universe, but conversely it could transcend pre-set expectations of the property in an innovative way. Herein lies a familiar trap where too much research and devotion to the property can hinder the adaptation process, and attempting to appease fans results in an overly faithful and

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[48] In the past fifteen to twenty years a shifting power relationship has occurred with regard to media audiences. When Jenkins (1992) wrote about *Star Trek* fans of the 1970s and 1980s in his book *Textual Poachers*, he referred to them as the "powerless elite." However, with the influence of the internet and the growth of fan culture, creators such as J. Michael Straczynski with *Babylon 5* (1994–1998) and Joss Whedon with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003) recognised how important fans' opinions had become with regard to the wider perception of popular media properties, such that the afore-mentioned television series were written with the fans in mind. Alongside changes in fan culture and the shifting nature of audience culture, game audiences were becoming more vocal as well as expressing more critical viewpoints. This had the effect that developers began to recognise the power of their audience's voice, and felt the need to reassure fans of a property that the videogame tie-in would treat the adaptation with care by taking into account the lore and universe of the license.

[49] See *Kinect Star Wars* (LucasArts, 2012).

deeply familiar recreation. The game may be seen as boring to fans, offering nothing new in terms of narrative surprises or new locations, and resembling what Elkington (2009) refers to as a "direct adaptation."

It may be argued that the complex nature of the industrial process in creating film-to-game adaptations has many difficult factors and challenges as identified in this section. These exigencies work against the probability of creating a movie-license game of intrinsic quality. When researching the development accounts of movie-licensed games, time and again the notion is expressed of an almost impossible task, which in some cases is also a thankless enterprise. Making a movie-licensed game means having to fit in with the film production on both creative and practical levels, thus the difficulty is exacerbated. To quote Elkington (2009), the relationship between film production and game development for movie-licensed titles does not create natural synergy, but in his words, achieves "negative synergy" (p. 219). Thus, developing a game parallel to the production of a commercial feature film is fraught with peril.[50]

History of Film-To-Game Adaptation

Game Historiography: Explanatory Contexts

Game historiography is a problematic enterprise: relatively little scholarship exists in game history, and even less in serious consideration of game historiography. In one of the few extensive studies in this area, Hall (2011) places the movie-licensed game within a chronological historical survey discussing several influential industrial factors along with case studies of games that illuminate particular trends and demonstrate the progression of the film-to-game adaptation throughout game history. This section provides a brief periodised chronology of significant trends in game history as related to film-to-game adaptation, regarding the significance of particular works based upon intrinsic excellence, influence, and typicality.[51] The approach taken here considered a combination of technology, industrial forces and aesthetics, separating out periods of

[50] The complications of licensed development are articulated by O'Donnell's (2011) study of industry practice.

[51] In terms of game history in relation to film-to-game adaptation, "typicality" primarily refers to games of poor intrinsic quality as discussed in Chapter 4.

game history via console generations, which a common means of considering game history. Whilst the relationship between console games and film-to-game adaptation is somewhat arbitrary, here the approach is used to provide a clear chronological progression throughout game history. The function of this section is to foreground aesthetic, industrial and technological dimensions of film-to-game adaptation and position the topic in an historical context.

Periodisation

For the purposes of this thesis game history is considered according to the following four periods:

Early commercial game history – 1st / 2nd Generations – 1972–1983
3rd / 4th Generations – 1983–1999
5th / 6th Generations – 1993–2005
Current period – 7th / 8th Generations – 2005–today

Early Commercial Game History

Early commercial game history was dominated by highly abstracted games [52] as computing power was limited, and the nature of console games tended towards relatively rudimentary takes on action game genres such as race games, chase games, and shooting games (Arsenault, 2014; Kent, 2001; Donovan, 2010). Aldred (2012a) discusses the strategies employed in some of the earliest film-to-game adaptations, specifically the ways in which technological limitations led to highly abstracted representation and how this in turn affected adaptation. From an industrial perspective, the earliest film-to-game adaptations were unlicensed tie-ins relying on name recognition of the original film's title; game developers wished to exploit the name of the feature film to gain a commercial advantage.

Since the formal processes for licensing with respect to videogames prior to 1979 were not in place, a small number of games based on films were released in an unofficial

[52] These types of games are considered within the Extrapolation Model discussed in Chapter 4.

manner. Well-known examples of early unlicensed games were Atari's *Shark Jaws* (1975), a highly abstracted adaptation of Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975), and *Death Race* (Exidy, 1976) based on *Death Race 2000* (Bartel, 1975), the game that triggered gaming's first moral panic (Kocurek, 2012). In the case of *Shark Jaws*, Nolan Bushnell approached the owner of the *Jaws* property, Universal Studios, to buy the license for a game, but was turned down. Bushnell went ahead anyway and made a coin-operated game, using the film's title within his adapted title (Russell, 2012, p. 16). However, Bushnell ensured the game's title was rendered in such a way on the arcade cabinet that the word "Shark" appeared tiny in comparison with the word "Jaws," tricking players into the impression of the game simply being called *Jaws*.

The earliest example of a movie-licensed game is considered to be *Superman* (Atari, 1979) released for the Atari 2600 console six months after the 1978 feature film of the same name (Montfort & Bogost, 2009). Even though the *Superman* game would be considered a simultaneous release, its film-to-game adaptation status is contested, since both the abstracted nature of the character and environmental representation bear no solid connection to the film. Further to this, there is little association between the overall game design and the events of the film. While the marketing and paratextual elements of the game never make reference to the film, Hall (2011, p. 53) notes that according to an Atari programmer working on the game, it was designed to be a film tie-in. As Russell (2012) relates, in a very short space of time the cost of licensing increased as potential profits were recognised.

> "In the beginning we would pay say 3% in royalties to license a title," recalls Jewel Savadelis, former marketing director for the VCS division. "But as there started to be competition for licensing games from companies like Mattel and Coleco, the price began to go up. When it came to licensing titles like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the industry was at a stage where you had to pay 10 to 12%." (p. 30)

Designer Howard Scott Warshaw was one of the first to consider the relationship between games and movies. Interviewed by Russell (2012) on his work on *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Atari, 1982), he considered how he could adapt the film property with only 2nd generation videogame technology at his disposal. His solution was to "reduce it to its most rudimentary action components… [to] then recreate them in broad gameplay

strokes. The hope…was that the player's basic desire to engage with the fantasy would carry them past the blocky VCS sprites" (p. 27) and thus he attempted to capture the scope of the film by designing a game using the adventure puzzle genre. Ironically, Warshaw's work on *Raiders* was so well received that he was the go-to for Spielberg to adapt *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial.* However, the production schedule was so restrictive that he then became infamous as the designer of one of the worst videogames of all-time, a game emblematic of the hubris of the American videogame industry of the time that greatly contributed to the impending industry crash of 1983. As Donovan (2010) notes, "If any single game summed up both the excesses of the boom years and the pain of the fall, it was *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*—Atari's big VCS 2600 game for Christmas 1982" (p. 108).

For a period in videogame history that spanned the 2nd to 4th generations, some movie-licensed games bore little relation to the original property,[53] with the only discernible connection seen through the game's actual title. In a move analogous to exploitation film production practice, the box art of the licensed game often became at least as important as the actual game, replicating key art from the film's movie posters and promising potential consumers an interactive version of the source film. Companies such as Ocean Software were known for taking advantage of this strategy.

3rd / 4th Generation

In the midst of a barren landscape after the crash of the American gaming industry, British company Ocean Software was emblematic of this period of film-to-game adaptation. Almost an industry unto themselves, they produced a vast amount of rapidly developed low-budget adaptations of high-profile mainstream Hollywood genre films. Initially, licenses could be procured cheaply as they held little value with the studio, however this changed drastically once film studios realised their commercial value as company co-founder David Ward relates: "our first licence was *a few thousand* [dollars]. So we'd moved from a few thousand to millions of dollars in the space of ten years" (p. 65). The 1987 Ocean adaptation of *Platoon* (Stone, 1986) was a great

[53] Hall (2011) notes that the Atari 2600 adaptations of *Porky's* (Clark, 1982) and *M*A*S*H* (Altman, 1970) relied "heavily on exposition in the instruction manual to link the game adaptation to its source" (p. 77).

commercial success which grew the company's reputation as the go-to movie license game developer, but more significantly, it changed the skittish attitude of the studios to film-to-game adaptation. As co-founder Jon Woods explains:

> From then on, we had the credibility of *Platoon* and it changed everything… Suddenly the movie companies… recognised that computer games were actually a profit centre for revenue… they started sending a script before the movie was even being made. And this was wonderful, because then we stood a chance of getting the game out at the same time as the movie. (as cited in Wilkins & Kean, 2013, p. 49).

However, alongside Ocean's big successes[54] were numerous games considered to be of poor intrinsic quality due to the continuing scenario of swift development processes and meager budgets. Another noteworthy company producing movie-licensed titles from the late 1980s and early 1990s was LJN Toys, owned during this period by Acclaim Entertainment, who were notorious for their steady output of low-quality movie-licensed games as Hall (2011) points out:

> The reputation of Acclaim began to drop… as it began to produce poorly crafted games. By the time the *Batman Forever* (1995) game was released, Acclaim had been cited for producing some of the worst video games of all time and contributing to the negative impression that film-to-game translations are substandard video games. (p. 128)

Although continued distribution of poor movie-licensed games throughout the 3rd and 4th generations perpetuated the negative stigma, it can also be seen that the film industry began to once more view movie-licensed titles as avenues for profit, and across the board this renewed license holders' attention: "By the 1990s, Hollywood was again

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[54] Ocean's adaptation of *RoboCop* (Verhoeven, 1987) was a first both in terms of its commercial success, "'I think it was the first million-unit seller,' Gary recalls" (Wilkins & Kean, 2013, p. 51), and in terms of its unusual marketing strategy for the time: "I did a contra-deal with the video company—we didn't get it out in time for the movie's release. We put an advert for the VHS video on the game and they put a thirty-second advert for the game on the video, which was one of the biggest-selling videos of its time. *RoboCop* was the game that put Ocean on the world map" (Wilkins & Kean, 2013, p. 51).

interested in games. Companies like Dreamworks SKG, Time Warner and Disney, as well as other media giants, began to build their own game development units" (Nichols, 2014, p. 118). These new arms of the established media conglomerates were poised to take advantage of one of the most significant shifts in videogame technology.

5th / 6th Generation

Thompson (2007) notes that 1995–1996 signaled a turning point in videogame technology with the advent of the 5th generation of videogames consoles (p. 229). Hall (2011) comments on the effect of evolving technology on game design:

> While the precedent had been set in the early days of gaming to isolate an essential action or limited set of actions to adapt from a film—such as… *Raiders of the Lost Ark*—to suggest what the film had already established, as the technology progressed games could provide more narrative, spatial, and visual content. (p. 135)

5th generation games consoles such as the Sony PlayStation employed CD-ROM optical drive technology that greatly increased storage space for games over the cartridge-based storage of previous generations. Hall goes on to note that abstraction is replaced by a higher fidelity of representation, and the notion of exploring spaces becomes key, allowing for off-screen film diegeses to become explorable. During this period, Hollywood was becoming further involved in game development, as technological advancements allowing for 3D actor models advanced the importance of adapting the actor's likenesses, as well as voice talents coming into play with extensive recording of dialogue.

Significantly, two companies began to acquire film licenses and publish tie-in games: Activision and EA. Chief among these titles were Activision's games based on the Dreamworks animated features and the *Spider-Man* series (Raimi, 2002–2007), and EA's *The Lord of the Rings* games. The significant growth of Activision can be strongly attributed to this move into development of games based on leading film franchises (Russell, 2012).

In the early 2000s several film licenses embarked on a new direction in film-to-game adaptation—transmedia storytelling. Game adaptations are now no longer primarily linked to the Extrapolation Model or the Reflection Model, but become serialised entries into the larger franchise, with games exhibiting the characteristics of sequence elements such as sequels (*The Thing* for instance), prequels or interquels. The game extension of *The Matrix*, *Enter the Matrix*, is still considered the best example of transmedia at work in a licensed film game. *Enter the Matrix* is remarkable due to the high level of authorship from the film's directors. Extremely ambitious, it holds particular significance for its pioneering attempt to fully realise transmedial storytelling options.

Though it garnered high commercial success, *Enter the Matrix* is seen critically as a failed experiment. Neil Young, one of the senior producers at EA, fully embraced the idea of exploring the possibilities of transmedia storytelling with *Enter the Matrix*, however, the end result was less than stellar and didn't fulfill the game's intentions of offering an innovative and engaging extension of the *Matrix* universe. To some extent, the critical failure of *Enter the Matrix* as a transmedia extension of the *Matrix* franchise can be seen to have hindered the progression of further movie-licensed games as transmedia experiences.

Although studios held a renewed interest in expanding their ownership and control of movie tie-in games for a time, the risk outweighed the potential economic benefit: "by 2000 most Hollywood studios decided to abandon their development units in favour of licensing their IP—thereby shifting the risk of development to games studios" (Nichols, 2014, p. 119). A new licensing trend emerged in the mid-2000s by way of pillaging Hollywood's back catalogue, which Nichols (2014) argues was due to cheap back catalogue licenses (p. 125). Nichols estimates said licenses ranged from between US$150,000 to $400,000 (p. 126), which was a fractional fee compared with the contemporaneous movie license of $1 million or more. Russell (2012) refers to such movie-licensed games as "retro-licensed" titles, including *James Bond 007: From Russia with Love* (EA, 2005), *The Godfather* (2006), *Scarface: The World is Yours* (2006), and a 2007 cancelled *Dirty Harry* game (p. 210). Hall (2011) also points to the strategy from the mid-2000s onwards of "resurrect[ing] dormant film franchises that

still retain a high level of consumer recognition" (p. 170), such as the *Ghostbusters* (1984–present), and *Alien* (1979–present) franchises.

Notably, the connection between animated films and videogames was recognised as a lucrative angle, and long-term deals were struck to capitalise on this. A critical example is seen in the Pixar and THQ licensing deal after the success of the film and game of *Finding Nemo* (Stanton, 2003). After this prosperous alignment, others followed suit, such as the exclusive five-year arrangement between Nickelodeon and THQ. In 2004, a range of developers signed licensing agreements with animation studios to produce spin-off games of animated films (Nichols, 2014, p. 125).

Travellers' Tales began their LEGO movie adaptation franchise in 2005 with their adaptation of the *Star Wars* Prequel Trilogy, which garnered many future entries and stands in the current period as among the most significant forms of film-to-game adaptation. This in turn paved the way for *The LEGO Movie* franchise (2014–current) and *LEGO Dimensions* (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015–2017).

7th / 8th Generation (Current Period)

Hall (2011) notes the considerable spike in film-to-game releases that coincided with the 7th generation of games consoles in 2005 and 2006, as well as the steep decline in these levels only two years later (p. 167). It is clear that this decline in film-to-game titles is due heavily to the increased complexities of game development requiring high definition graphics output and the requisite technology. Hall muses: "Clearly, both the film and video game industries are reevaluating what the nature of collaboration might mean… when economic and technology considerations have brought the two businesses closer than ever before" (p. 167). In response to this, Hall points to three potential reasons—firstly, a growth in ambition for developers to create their own original intellectual property; second is the increase in costs to acquire film licenses for popular exploitable films; and third is the development cost of the technology to create game animated verisimilitudinous cinematic images, and the necessary time and cost associated with achieving this (pp. 167-168).

From 2012, a significant shift can be seen with the move away from AAA simultaneous releases in light of a growing trend of film-to-game adaptations for mobile devices. In a way this can be seen to act in a similar fashion to licensed movie tie-in games of earlier generations acting as promotion for the film release. This alternative platform meant both less risk and less investment was required compared with a console release, both in terms of license cost and development resources.[55]

Since the advent of *Skylanders* (Activision, 2011–present), Disney had been considering a "toys-to-life" product, and in early 2013 released the first iteration of *Disney Infinity* (Disney Interactive, 2013–2016): an amalgamation of popular Disney licenses including Disney animation back catalogue properties, as well as both Marvel and *Star Wars* properties. The game featured physical toy versions of characters and a common in-game space (the "toybox") where the different properties could crossover and interact. Notably, 2015's highest grossing film, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, was afforded two game adaptations: a simultaneous release as part of *Disney Infinity 3.0*, and then in June 2016 as *LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Even though *Disney Infinity* was a successful venture for Disney, it wasn't successful enough, and the overheads proved too taxing. As of 2016, Disney decided to cease production of *Disney Infinity* as well as all videogame development, switching to licensing their properties to external game publishers (Alexander, 2016, n.p.). The ceasing of production of *Disney Infinity* suggests that the continual revenues required by Disney to attain profit targets were in excess of actual revenues, and that the potential revenues that they could generate from simply licensing their IP would be more financially lucrative. Similarly, *LEGO Dimensions* saw the same fate by the end of 2017 (Phillips, 2017, n.p.).

This recent trend can be seen as a shift towards the Amalgamation Model,[56] which mirrors the trends in Hollywood film production of creating self-contained universes such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). Many of the Marvel Cinematic Universe films have been given the LEGO adaptation treatment. For instance, *LEGO Marvel's Avengers* (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2016) combines events from *The*

[55] For some years, the mobile game has garnered a general association with the bad object. An indicator of this is the free-to-play model frequently used in the mobile game industry.
[56] The Amalgamation Model will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Avengers (Whedon, 2012), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (Russo bros., 2014), *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (Whedon, 2015), and other Marvel films.

The 8th generation has so far shown a decided lack of dedicated tie-in games for major studio film releases: many studios decide not to release large-scale tie-in games alongside major blockbuster films. For instance, top grossing contemporary film franchises such as *The Hunger Games* (2012–2015) failed to garner a console tie-in game release. A franchise of this type would have been delectable fodder for a film-to-game title during the previous generations of game history.

In this chapter, key industrial concepts associated with film-to-game adaptation including licensing and franchising and the relationship between film production and analogous game development introduce issues that will be explored in the later case studies. It is a crucial considertation of this thesis to include the industrial factors within the framework of contextual analysis due to the large impact on move-licensed game creation. The history of film-to-game adaptations has cultivated a bad reputation amongst gamers, critics, and the industry alike. The next chapter will investigate the nature of the disreputable remediation of film to videogame.

Chapter 4.

Film-To-Game Adaptation:

Disreputable Remediation

"most games connected to the movie industry end up sucking."
(Miller, 2009, n.p.)

Regarding *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Atari, 1982):
"As a game it was utterly, utterly awful." (Russell, 2012, p. 38)

This chapter addresses three questions: firstly, what defines textual badness? Secondly, how does textual badness operate with regard to film-to-game adaptation? And thirdly, what is the significance of film-to-game adaptation being disreputable?

Few aspects of videogame culture are as derided as movie-licensed games. Popular lists of "the worst videogames of all-time" invariably contain a number of licensed games, including high-profile film-to-game adaptations known for their extremely poor reputation.[57] Brown and Krzywinska opine: "Movie inspired videogames have a fairly low reputation amongst dedicated gaming audiences… some movie tie-ins have been disastrous failures" (2009, p. 89). Rabowsky (2009) further states, "many core gamers and those in the gaming press have a negative perception of licensed games. This perception is supported by licensed games' history of mostly poor ratings and quality" (Chapter 11, para. 6).[58] Due to the many poor-quality movie-licensed games made throughout game history such as *The Karate Kid* (LJN, 1987), and *Dick Tracy* (Bandai, 1990), to more recent examples *007 Legends* (2012), and *Aliens: Colonial Marines* (Sega, 2013), film-to-game adaptations have taken on the perception in both the

[57] See for instance: Stuart et al. (2015), GamesRadar Staff (2017), Cox et al. (2017).
[58] See Erickson (2008) for instance.

industry, and in game culture of the "bad object"—little more than an opportunity to exploit both the brand name and the hype surrounding the release of a major film (Nutt, 2008).

One may say that film tie-in games are the epitome of the videogame "bad object." An important factor connected with the phenomenon of film-to-game adaptation is a failure to live up to the expectations of the film hypotext, thereby leading to an association of poor comparative quality or "badness." This chapter will address the condition of the film-to-game adaptation as bad object. Several movie-licensed games that exhibit a disreputable reputation are considered examples of the Extrapolation Model, which will be articulated in this chapter. The aesthetics and reception of the film-licensed game are also explored, while directly addressing notions of badness related to these types of games through discussion of key games, developer accounts, and the critical and popular reception of various film-licensed games. A key consideration with regard to badness and film-licensed titles is that of the relative association between the game title and the film property from which the game is adapted. It is argued that a type of "relative badness" results from a mundane or ordinary adaptation of an extraordinary film source, in that the promise of the game adaptation extending the experience of the source film is not fulfilled ludologically.

Brookey (2010) deals with the question of how or why textual badness manifests in movie-licensed games, suggesting a potential reason:

> In the context of convergence, the design of games accommodates interests other than those of quality game play. When a film studio begins working with a game developer on a video game spin-off, the studio's interest is in the profitability of the film. Therefore, the game design often must incorporate promotional aspects that need not be included in a game designed to stand on its own. (p. 138)

There is a consistency amongst terms used by scholars with regard to movie-licensed games. Brookey (2010) uses the term "questionable quality" (p. 18), Monfort and Bogost (2009) describe *E.T.* and *Pac-Man* (1982) for the Atari 2600 as "Licensed games of dubious quality" (p. 76), whilst Hall (2011) consistently employs the term "substandard" to describe disreputable movie-licensed games. As Hall (2011) explains:

> While many film-to-game translations have indeed produced substandard games, this is typically the result of the advantages and constraints of video games as a medium not being dealt with adequately in the development process, which can also be problematized by additional creative, technical, and marketing factors. (p. 40)

This long-standing association reverberates through the attitudes held by a great many developers, critics, and players. Hall (2011) also states:

> Movie properties are just one in a host of licenses sought by the video game industry—others include sports, television, comic books, cartoons, and toys—and games based on films are the most licensed source material. This franchise effect has cast some stigma on licensed property games of all kinds, devaluing their potential as media and equating them with other derivative products from their respective intellectual properties. (p. 40)

Developers may have the best of intentions, but as Elkington explains, film-to-game releases are often self-defeating; the developers feel they have failed, critics see the games are bad, players see the games as bad, and thus we see a general perception that the games lack quality. As Elkington (2009) states, these games "receive a generally hostile reception from game reviews and players" (p. 214). Warren Buckland reflects this same stance: "movie inspired videogames have a fairly low reputation amongst dedicated gaming audiences" (Buckland in Schulzke, 2013, Chapter 5, para. 2). Similarly, Aldred (2002) states: "Movie tie-in games have a long, storied history of disappointing film and video game fans alike" (p. 91).

The games that form the corpus of case studies for this thesis exhibit a level of intrinsic excellence, as evidenced by evaluative critical aggregator sites, Moby Games and Metacritic, and have set themselves apart from the vast majority of examples of this type of adaptation. Since the default position of movie-licensed games is one of disreputability, the critical and player reception findings for a number of the case study games made particular reference to the exceptional status of the work in question, and in relation to film-to-game adaptations generally:

> Come to think of it, *GoldenEye 007* is a real oddity. Licensed games are rarely good. Games based on movies, specifically, are even less likely to be good. (Cor 13, 2013, n.p.)
>
> When I heard that entertainment titan Universal was working on a game based on one of their classic movies [*The Thing*], I couldn't help but wonder if it was going to be another member of the 'Hall of Shame,' or if it was finally going to give us hope for the future of movie-to-games conversions. (*The Thing Review*, n.d., n.p.)
>
> Sat amid a swarm of at best mediocre tie-ins, and at worse soulless cash-grabs, *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* stood as a *gleaming inverse* [emphasis added] in a world of film adaptations. (Cameron, 2013, n.p.)

This thesis has decided against using movie-licensed games of poor intrinsic quality as case studies to explicate the models presented, but this is not to say that the models do not apply to lesser quality film-to-game adaptations. The rationale for the thesis corpus selection was to choose only intrinsically excellent examples of this phenomenon as justified in the introductory Chapter. The research questions and the subsequent examples in Chapter 4 presage and contrast the analyses of the case studies in the third part of the thesis.

Defining Badness

Badness is considered almost a defining characteristic of film-to-game adaptations; therefore, it is essential to understand badness and articulate how it is represented textually. In this arena, the term "bad object" is often used to deal with the phenomena. Jeffrey Sconce's 1995 essay "Trashing the Academy" is a seminal piece of scholarship centring around "trash" cinema (citing various subgenres including one he coins the "badfilm") in which he locates badness within a discussion of taste and excess. However, it is important to point out that the nature of badness with respect to film-to-game titles is not only one of "trash aesthetics" considered by Sconce, rather it is a kind

of badness orchestrated by the various industrial strictures that exist in the creation of this type of game.[59]

An important consideration of trash cinema is the presence of cult audiences devoted to loving the badness of the object.[60] However in the game equivalent there is very little evidence of a pleasure that can be attached to the badness of the game prima facie. In fact, the missing pleasure aspect is substituted by an alternate factor, which can be articulated as a type of disappointment, or being cheated by the experience. A tangential exception may be seen in that there can be a pleasure attached to *watching* (rather than actually playing) someone suffer through the frustration of playing the game because of its badness. If you take a YouTube Let's Play of *Friday the 13th* (LJN, 1989) or *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (LJN, 1990), there may be pleasure in watching a player attempt to play through the game, and experience their bemusement, confusion, and most importantly, anger.[61]

Leading scholars in cult cinema studies (Hunter, 2013; Mathijs, 2005; Sconce, 1995) have associated the concept of trash with badness. As Hunter states:

> Trash is necessarily a loose term, as much defined by films that tickle a certain sensibility… such as kitsch, surreal, tasteless and weird… The term "trash" obviously has wider cultural meanings than just film. In culture, trash is not a precise category, but rather, like a genre or a mode, changeable and pragmatic. In part evaluative (badness, indifference to aesthetic value, throwaway), in part descriptive (a style of reckless or hapless excess and lack of inhibition), and in part simply denoting aesthetically null aspects of popular culture—the disposable products of society, anonymous, replaceable, ephemeral and seemingly worthless—in short, the vulgar. (2013, p. 15)[62]

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[59] Initially discussed in Chapter 2.
[60] A love "beyond all reason" according to film critic Andrew Sarris. See Telotte (1991, p. 5).
[61] James Rolfe's YouTube review show *The Angry Video Game Nerd* (*AVGN*) builds its reputation on reviewing retro-games of poor intrinsic quality (McGlynn, 2016). It is not a coincidence that licensed games, and film tie-in in particular, feature heavily across the entire series of *AVGN*, as it comically deals with questions of taste, value and nostalgia.
[62] Notably, Hunter's terms "anonymous, replaceable, ephemeral and seemingly worthless".
are all synchronous with phrases often used by critics and players to describe movie-licensed games.

Hunter goes on to explain: "Trashiness can be regarded as an *intrinsic* quality of film, an unavoidable consequence of its Faustian pact with commerce and its historical ties to melodrama, comic books and the sub-literary, as well as the disposability enforced by its traditional weekly exhibition cycles" (p. 15). Even though this quote refers to trash in relation to cinema, a number of Hunter's comments are germane to the medium of videogames. If cinema exhibits historical ties to melodrama, comic books, and the sub-literary, then videogames continues this trend as a remediation of cinema. It may be argued that, like cinema, trashiness is also intrinsic to the nature of videogames. Hunter goes on to propose that film adaptations drag the literary source down to its level, "debauching it with accessibility and populism" (p. 18). King and Krzywinksa (2006) propose that "spectacle" and "sensation" are two of the key characteristics of videogame form, and these can be labelled as non-literary conditions, however they are shared with cinematic form. Thus, it can be posited that videogames, arguably positioned on another stage lower on the cultural hierarchy, drag movie adaptations into a deeper realm of trash or badness.

Adaptation scholar Constantine Verevis (2014) uses the term "BADaptation" referring to adaptations dealing with issues of "betrayal, degradation or infidelity" (p. 216) in relation to a source work, and thus problematises the oft referred-to concept of fidelity.[63] It is a fine line as to where the qualities that define Verevis's BADaptation end and intrinsic ineptitude begins.

Textual Badness

Historically, film-to-game adaptations have struggled with thematic and tonal adaptations of source films. As we have seen, adaptations involve a combination of considerations—both concrete, such as aesthetic and narrative, as well as conceptual. However, even though the concrete can be adapted, the conceptual can be lost. Film-to-game adaptations may be considered bad in two main ways: the game may be prima facie bad, independent of any issues of adaptation; secondly, the game may be a poor

[63] Discussed in Chapter 2.

translation of the original source material into videogame form—actualising Verevis's term BADaptation.

There are various dimensions of textual badness when considering film-to-game adaptations. From a BADaptation angle, this may involve narrative inconsistency in correlation with the source film. Mistranslation of salient elements of film form and style to game form may radically alter the tone and impression of a work. The choice of a game genre that doesn't complement the subject matter may create a disjunction in terms of the film's genre, tone and style, versus the adaptation's game genre. In turn, this may lead to a poor implementation of game mechanics, a lack of meaningful agency which may in turn lead to immersion issues (Calleja, 2011). In some cases, the genre of the game adaptation is determined by industry trends.[64] Bad game design decisions such as shoehorning gameplay elements into narrative moments featured in the original film, provide for various types of ludonarrative dissonance (Hocking, 2007) whereby a disjunction occurs between storytelling and gameplay. Elkington (2009) notes that what he calls "direct games" (akin to Reflection Model games) are "generally the most criticised games on the market" (p. 219), and since the game's narrative is based on the film events, the game eliminates "any element of suspense" (p. 219). He goes on to note that some reasons these games are lambasted are due to their linear level design and overreliance on the commonly used technique of the cut-scene (p. 219).

The interactive movie is a particular type of game that has long been associated with textual badness, and in some ways is the direct remediation of cinema into videogame form, essentially making cut-scenes the heart of the game. This maligned genre of videogames is connected to a period in game history when full-motion video (FMV) seemed to be the future of game aesthetics with the advent of CD-ROM technology (Perron, 2008; Russell, 2012). It is striking that as the seemingly most natural option for film-to-game adaptation—the interactive movie—was not feasible due to constraints (at least at the level of high-budget, star-driven films) of employing alternative narrative options incorporating film footage of actors.[65]

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[64] The impression exists that in the 1980s and 1990s many film-to-game adaptations were platform games due to the currency of platformers being the prominent genre at the time, independent of the form or subject matter of the original film.

[65] Having said this, a small number of film and television licensed games employed the interactive movie format, such as *The X-Files Game* (Fox Interactive, 1998).

Cut-scenes are highly problematic in most film-to-game adaptations, as it highlights the aesthetic differential between the cut-scene footage and the game engine rendering. Aldred (2014) suggests that animated cut-scene replication of scenes from films fail at capturing the "realistic, emotive performance" of their source:

> In most videogames licensed from movies, our character's promotional obligations as avatars of their franchise IP are nowhere more painfully emphasised than in cut-scenes that repeat scenes from the film they're based on, often borrowing motion-captured performance data and high-resolution photographic scans of the actors from the film. This tactic tends to prompt especially harsh scrutiny of the characters in question and their failed attempts at realistic, emotive performance. (p. 113)

The issue is lessened in contemporary releases with more advanced graphics on the latest consoles to produce a photorealistic effect, but in previous generations the differential is far greater, highlighting the vast gulf between film footage and game engine technology.

Adaptation techniques such as addition, resequencing, omission, interpolation, and refocalisation may be employed in aberrant ways. This includes the movie-game's rearranging of story events that work entirely against the spirit of the original film, or instances where iconic film moments are condensed into a kind of montage that robs them of any sense of drama or emotional engagement. These factors lead to a failure to ludologically communicate a transmedia experience from the original film property to the movie-game. The game adaptation then does not accord with expectations and associated meanings of the film property. According to Russell (2012), in making *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Atari, 1982) Warshaw "hoped to approach the movie's emotional tone" (p. 38), however, the reality of the outcome is summed up in his assessment: "As a game it was utterly, utterly awful" (p. 38). This problem with translation, and the lack of replicating emotional tone has continued throughout game history, and the most prestigious titles are not immune, whether in past or current generations. A review of

Alien: Isolation highlights this issue with regards to prior adaptations in the *Alien* franchise:[66]

> Time and again, products with the *Alien* name slapped on come out to further drag the once impeccable brand name through the mud. One of the more painful and recent additions to the list is *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, which initially seemed so promising, but fails to evoke the paranoid terror of the early films, and is a buggy, broken mess. (*Alien: Isolation Review*, 2014)

Throughout game history there have even been instances of games having a license imposed upon them to detrimental effect, mainly seen on console titles from the early period through to the 3rd generation, as well as mobile movie-licensed releases. The game in development may have had little or no intrinsic relationship to the film property, ultimately producing a game adaptation that is entirely aberrant in its relationship to the source film. In some cases, film licenses have been imposed on games that are clearly "clones" or "knockoffs" of successful titles in the marketplace.[67] As Hall (2011) notes:

> In the early days of video games, it was not uncommon to have games in development or already completed to be rebranded to exploit a film license (Twentieth Century Fox single-handedly set this precedent). Unfortunately, the connections between most of these games and their sources were often specious at best" (p. 41)

The intrinsic quality of the game as compared with the intrinsic quality of the film from which it is adapted, relates to the idea of "relative badness." The relative badness of the game is interconnected with the license, so for example, if the source film is of high

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[66] *Star Trek* (Bandai Namco, 2013) is another example of an established franchise to fall victim to these pitfalls. In the publicity prior to the release of the game, the developers discussed their awareness of the bad object movie-license trend—time and again they stated that they would not fall into the trap. The game however, is full of glitches and character blandness: even though characters have the likeness and voices of Kirk and Spock, they appear as blank and empty digital puppets, sharing absolutely none of their interiority.

[67] As David Flodine, editor of the mobile game review site AppSpy.com in the late 2000s and early 2010s told me, "Reskinning games for mobile was pretty ubiquitous. A number of Marvel tie-in games were reskinned versions of the enormously popular endless runner *Temple Run* (Imangi Studios, 2011)" (D. Flodine, personal communication, September 21, 2017).

quality, and the game adaptation does not match this level of intrinsic quality, relative badness is a likely result. Potential players familiar with the license expect to engage in an experience that in some ways replicates the experience of the core film. When the game fails to live up to that expectation, the game's inferiority is increased with relative comparison to the quality of the cinematic experience. So here we see an interplay between an extraordinary source film and the subsequent mundane or ordinary game adaptation, where viewing the game through a comparative lens, the game's relative badness is dramatically heightened. One of the reasons why the *E.T.* tie-in is considered among the worst games of all time is because of this condition of relative badness; although the game itself contains many instances of substandard game design, its failing is primarily due to the differential between the intrinsic excellence and beloved nature of the source film, and its adaptation into a game of "dubious quality" (Montfort & Bogost, 2009, p. 76). Thus, the game is perceived to have lost quality by virtue of its adaptive association.

This notion of relative badness applies not only to intrinsically bad movie-licensed games, but to examples that may be considered functional: a generally average game appears relatively worse compared with an outstanding original film. Just as the iconic action films *Mad Max* (Miller, 1979) and *Mad Max 2* (Miller, 1981) are considered among the most influential films in world cinema to come out of the New Wave of Australian film in the 1970s and 1980s (Martin, 1995; 2003), the *Mad Max* franchise has been highly influential in videogames as well.[68] Despite its influence, when it came time to release an actual licensed *Mad Max* game (2015), the property did not escape the typical appraisal of mediocre movie-licensed games as Polygon's review illustrates:

> Yet there's a feeling that pervaded my time with *Mad Max*, a sense of everything in the game being... okay. The films that developer Avalanche Studios are ostensibly drawing from are driven by ambition. They build visions of a world shaped by off-the-wall absurdity and chaos. This *Mad Max*, by comparison, feels safe and, frankly, boring. (Kollar, 2015)

[68] The *Fallout* series (Interplay & Bethesda, 1997–present), especially *Fallout 3* (Bethesda, 2008), can be seen as greatly influenced by the *Mad Max* franchise, as can the *Borderlands* series (2K Games, 2009–present).

This interplay between expectation and disappointment is at the heart of relative badness, and can affect the overall regard for the franchise. In the past, properties had been shielded from bad object status associated with the movie-game due to the "it's only a game" argument. Early games had technical limitations that restricted their potential representation of the film property, thus the bad object status of the tie-in game could be separated from the source film in the mind of the audience.

However, in more recent times, the nature of the association between source film and game adaptation has shifted. For instance, if a player is initially unfamiliar with the source property and the poor-quality game tie-in is the first access point to the property, this experience establishes their first impression of the property. If their attitude is negative, then they may not proceed with accessing other texts within the franchise. This shift in regard toward the franchise is becoming more commonly seen with recent releases, particularly with the involvement of key acting talent featured in the source films as players draw a closer relationship between game tie-ins and the source films of a franchise.[69] As indicated in Chapter 3, one of the reasons for the reduction in output of film-licensed titles in recent years, is this growing association in audiences' minds, coupled with the well-established problem of quality with regard to film-to-game adaptations.

It can be seen that over time the industry has discarded the early notion of "it's only a game," and recognised that the franchise can be damaged with a poor-quality game tie-in. In 2004, Warner Bros Interactive Entertainment attempted to design a scheme to protect their IP "from being damaged by publishers making bad licensed games" (Fahey, 2004) such that, "Under the terms of Warner Bros' new contracts, the company will charge publishers a fluctuating royalty rate based on review scores for games—with titles which score under 70 per cent on aggregate being subject to higher royalty payments" (Fahey, 2004).

[69] This incorporation of acting talent in more recent games has on many occasions led to another avenue of textual badness, as Gray (2010) states: "too many licensed games rely on the presence of film or television characters and voiceovers to rescue what is basically an uninspired offering with tepid gameplay" (p. 188).

According to Neil Young, BADaptations have the potential to exhibit "subtractive comprehension" rather than transmedia's "additive comprehension" (cited in Jenkins, 2006a, p. 123). Rather than the audience gaining a deeper understanding of the properties' universe, they may be confused by mixed messages and come away with a lesser understanding of the property.

The Stigma of The Movie License

> "Movie games have a bad history," said Jeff Poffenbarger, senior producer at *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* game developer Raven Software. "There is a stigma to movie games, for a thousand different reasons. They come out and they don't live up to the hype people create."
>
> (Lang, 2009, n.p.)

A deep cynicism exists when considering the film-licenced game, which has been associated with disreputability due to its critically marginalised status and low cultural value. As Hall (2011) states: "Detractors of film-to-game translations have been the most vocal in pigeonholing these types of games into a marginalized classification as if the very nature of the adaptation predetermines a poor game" (p. 40). Traditionally, movie-licenced games suffer from rushed development schedules, and so artistic quality frequently becomes a relatively low priority compared with the financial necessity of ensuring the game is released to coincide with the theatrical release of the associated film if the game is a synchronous release title (Elkington, 2009). In some cases, projects are abandoned due to the complexity of production management, as in the instance of Pandemic Studios' unreleased *The Dark Knight* game (Wildgoose, 2009).

This prejudice is also reflected in developer's attitudes, which can be seen from the earliest period of commercial game history: "Conventional wisdom among Atari programmers held that the idea of combining movies and games was fairly ludicrous" (Russell, 2012, p. 26). Atari's VCS programmers had an extreme reaction to the news that they were to make game adaptations of Hollywood properties and thus lose their autonomy: "'Pretty much all the programmers jeered at it,' recalls Dunn of the *Superman* license… 'They viewed it as prostituting themselves'" (Russell, 2012, p. 18).

In a similar period, the designer tasked with the adaptation of *Raiders of The Lost Ark* knew that the brief was not only potentially self-defeating, and was under no illusion as to the primarily commercial nature of the exercise:

> "It started purely as a marketing manoeuvre," Warshaw says. "The idea was we'll do a game and the movie will carry the sale, just like people think today… But for the programmers, the idea of taking something like the VCS and making something that relates to the movie in any way was a tough call. I mean, none of us really bought the idea that we were really representing the movie with the game." (Russell, 2012, p. 26)

Various developers attracted a reputation for poor-quality adaptations such as Ocean Software. Hall (2011) notes that, "By the time the *Batman Forever* (1996) game was released, Acclaim had been cited for producing some of the worst video games of all time and contributing to the negative impression that film-to-game translations are substandard video games" (p. 128). Elkington (2009) notes that critics are "negatively prejudiced" against film-to-game adaptations: "Critics work from the assumption that adapted video games will be of inferior quality unless proven otherwise" (p. 223). Another aspect to this is the fact that the vast majority of film tie-in games are based on children's films and thus made for a children's market; they are not intended for adult markets or critics. Evidently, there is a general disapproval from critics who must play and review these games, as the experience may be seen as totally void of pleasure for an adult player. Elkington (2009) quotes game developer Eric Peterson:

> Reviewers frequently don't give kids games a fair shake—some don't even bother to review them, either because they aren't "cool," or don't appeal to their demographic. When these games are reviewed, they are often compared to games for older audiences, and which have longer development cycles. (p. 223)

Following the period after the release of *Enter the Matrix*, the nature of the relationship between film studios and game developers became more intertwined with several film studios opening game development offshoots. "Veteran game director Joby Otero, chief creative officer at *Transformers: Revenge of The Fallen* (Activision, 2009) developer Luxoflux Studios said: 'I think Hollywood is communicating with the games industry on

a different level now. There's a recognition that a game's quality can impact the overall franchise"' (Lang, 2009, n.p.). By this time, industry figures recognised that a move away from Reflection Model adaptation would provide more scope for game adaptations, so games such as *Terminator Salvation* (Equity, 2009) and *GI Joe: Rise of the Cobra* (EA, 2009) adopt an Extension Model adaptation strategy.

As recently as 2009, Lyle Hall, game producer of such Disney-licensed titles as *The Incredibles* (THQ, 2004) and *Up* (THQ, 2009), noted that game tie-ins were still seen by players as primarily promotional rather than experiential:

> I still think they feel like it's the lunch box and the bed sheets… Those things are pressed out of a mold, but other than being on a disc, we are building and offering a creative experience. We're definitely trying to take inspiration from the film, which is built to inspire the audience. We're certainly trying to do the same thing. (as cited in Lang, 2009, n.p.)

Elkington (2009) conducted a study comparing the average Metacritic score of all games in a particular period versus film and television licensed games within the same period. He conceded that it was potentially problematic to use critical reception as a measure of intrinsic quality, but that ultimately "game reviews do offer a sense of perceived quality" (p. 216). Elkington's data was collected from 2005 and 2007; he found the average score for PS2 games was 69 in 2005, and for Film / TV licensed games was 61, with a quarter of these falling below 49. In 2007, the average score for PS2 games was 67.9, and for Film / TV licensed games was 56.9, but with a greater number of licensed titles produced that year. Elkington's data showed that more licensed titles added to the aggregate, producing lower scores. Considering why these games are so poorly reviewed, Elkington surmises: "Either the games are truly worse than other games on average, or critics just do not like adaptations, whatever their individual merits" (pp. 217–218).

Elkington (2009) analysed the critical reception of four titles in 2004, and deduced three main points from his investigations: "games have arrived as a culturally and aesthetically competitive narrative space to film and television as opposed to a simple licensed ancillary"; "players reject video games that rely heavily upon cinematic

conventions"; and "what video game consumers seek from adaptations is not a simple, interactive rehearsal of film events but in fact further expansion of a narrative world via an engaged relationship with an interactive medium" (p. 219). It can be rationalised that if the game fails to address these points, the possibility of it garnering poor reviews is significantly higher.

Industrial Factors Associated with Poor-Quality Adaptations

As discussed in Chapter 3, problems during development of movie tie-in games are frequent by virtue of constricted design briefs, lack of development budgets, lack of resources, and fixed release dates (in the case of simultaneous releases). A vast majority of games adapted from film properties suffer from a lack of creative approach to adaptation, resulting in mundane, conservative, uninspiring "products" at best, or games that are so poorly conceived that they actively work against the spirit of the source film and the property as a whole. The license holders grant the license with a strict set of limitations and so developers are not given scope to explore the license and consider innovative approaches to adaptation. In contemporary times, it is clear that the endemic problems with film tie-in games are well-known and understood by players. This is illustrated in the following player comment:

> I know the developers of this game can't be happy. But, I'm sure they were under a strict deadline to get the game out before the movie hits soon. So I blame the publisher on this. Do the investors ever sit down and play the games they bet their money on? Are the publishers proud of themselves when they put stuff like this on the market with their name on it? (brodiMAN, n.d.)

The term "shovelware" can be freely applied to many film-to-game adaptations due to the following industrial factors: a focus on maximising profit; a minimal development budget (as the majority of the budget was spent on acquiring the license); developers having no incentives as they will see none of the royalties; and the pressures of working to a tight deadline which is often synchronised with the film's release. Shovelware has been described as "poorly done licensed titles and shoddy ports" (Extra Credits, 2014). Extra Credits's discussion of the prevalent issues is consistent with Elkington's (2009)

analysis, again highlighting the problematic system of relationships within the pernicious industrial process of the licensed game. The quality of the game is not the highest significance, rather, a primary consideration is the exploitation of the brand recognition without significant attention to either the quality of the game or the overall brand. Shovelware games bank on the notion that "just being associated with the licensed property will sell the game" (Extra Credits, 2014). Ultimately this kind of exploitation of the license for profit generation is a short-sighted strategy, as it negatively affects future development of a property, in that consumers of the poor-quality game adaptation will harbour a negative association with that property.

Russell (2010) investigates the relationship between Hollywood and major game publishers during the early to mid 2000s. He points to a number of industrial tendencies of publishers and development studios that affected the quality of these titles:

> Despite the profits that industry giants like EA and Activision were making, licensed movie games cultivated a bad reputation among gamers—and often quite rightly so. Born out of a sometimes fractious, sometimes careless, relationship between the two industries, the games themselves were frequently stunted things that satisfied neither side. Compromise was endemic: deadlines were rushed to meet movie tie-in dates; resources weren't always freely shared; and movie studios often failed to understand the demands of the interactive medium they were asking their products to be ported over to. (p. 216)

As part of his research, Russell (2010) interviewed EA's Chief Creative Officer during this period, Bing Gordon, who relates to Russell that EA "wanted to be the 'New Hollywood'" (p. 213) at this time:

> Gordon notes that one of the problems was that movie studios had licensing departments that got paid on cash advances, which "undermined the motivation to partner for quality." Once you stripped away the marketing hype and Hollywood glamour surrounding these titles, it was obvious that they were largely shovelware: low-quality games churned out quickly and cheaply. Squint and you could be back in 1982, just with better graphics." (p. 216)

Up until 2010, almost 90% of movie-licensed games were based on Hollywood productions (Blanchet, 2011). However, a well-known license is no guarantee of marketplace success, whether it performed well commercially or not, as Rabowsky (2009) points out:

> Another issue with licenses is their spotty track record in the marketplace, and questionable longevity. The success of licensed games is closely tied to the success of the underlying property. If the film upon which a game is based flops at the box office, the game almost certainly will flop as well. Even a high-profile license is no guarantee of success, as many licensed games have failed to sell well despite being tied to a hit film or other well-known licensed property. (Chapter 11, para. 5)

A feature of the game adaptation of *Avatar* is the "Pandorapedia," an in-game in-universe encyclopaedia that functions as an extensive world-building element. However, Rose (2011) claims despite the time and resources afforded to the developers at Ubisoft, a majority of the effort on the game went into building the Pandorapedia with little attention to the actual mechanics of the gameplay. This lead to a highly disappointing game that "ended up playing more like a poorly executed promotion for the movie than a deep dive into Cameron's world" (p. 65). Here we see an example of developers putting a great deal of importance and focus onto transmedial concerns that fail to be realised when the overall game is of poor intrinsic quality. Russell (2012) points out several key issues:

> The problems of collaborating with movie production companies over sharing assets; the tight turnaround schedule needed to meet a movie release date; and the fact that you're more likely to be dealing with the studios' marketing departments rather than creatives on the film side—and it's obvious why licensed games are a difficult balancing act. (pp. 208–209)

Game producer and scholar Trevor Elkington acts as a key source, being that he is the leading writer on this phenomenon due to his expertise in licensing issues with regard to the game industry. Elkington's (2009) article "Too Many Cooks: Media Convergence and Self-Defeating Adaptations" is one of the most significant investigations of reasons

for the general failure in quality of film-to-game adaptations. As Elkington indicates, film-to-game adaptations strive for convergence and horizontal integration, in an effort to encourage synergy: “Rather than successfully drawing on the synergistic advantages of cross-media development and promotion, licensed film-to-game adaptation in particular must overcome a long history of critical and commercial failure” (p. 214).

Elkington (2009) states: “The process of making a good film is not the same process as making a good game, and the elements that make a film good may not translate well into game form” (p. 214). He refers to the process of creating film-to-game titles as “self-defeating adaptations,” as the various conditions placed on game developers have the potential to make it very difficult to create game translations of films, and consequently, creating game adaptations are generally exercises in defeat. He draws from Mette Hjort’s term “self-defeating productions,” relating to co-productions. Elkington extends this idea to the case of videogame adaptations: “Video games based on film and television licenses must attempt to appease two audiences: fans of the original license, who expect a certain adherence to its details, and fans of video games, who expect adherence to common notions of gameplay” (p. 215). This sense of “incompatible expectation” leads to mutual disappointment in both sets of invested audiences, whereby movie-licensed games: “conceivably fail to appeal to any by including multiple elements that please one audience and actively antagonize another, such that no audience is wholly satisfied” (Elkington, pp. 214–215).

Is there something intrinsic in the adaptation process that leads to bad adaptations? Elkington contends that media convergence doesn’t make things easier, it makes them more complex. Different goals of the license holders “stand in direct conflict, even contradiction, to each other, so that not only do they sacrifice consistency and continuity, they effectively achieve negative synergy, as each product antagonizes the contrasting audience” (pp. 218–219). This sense of attempting to appeal to a number of stakeholders is expressed by Eric Peterson, a game developer who specialises in adaptations of children’s films: “We were like taffy, being pulled between licensor, sub-licensor, and publisher, all of whom wanted something different. We still got the game done, but at a heavy price. Everyone felt like they were forced to make a game they didn’t believe in” (p. 224).

Elkington interviews Johan Kristiansson, CEO of Starbreeze Studios, the developer of *Escape from Butcher Bay*. Kristiansson identifies two specific issues that compromise quality: "conflicts of development time and schedule, and…conflicts within the design approval process" (p. 225). Elkington notes that it takes 12–18 months on average to produce a Hollywood film, while the average multiplatform game takes 24 months. Added to this, the revision of a film script is far more flexible than the rigid pipeline demands of game development whereby multiple steps in the approval process to enact changes creates further consternation. In an interview with Mat Kraemar, Lead Designer at Sanzaru Games, Kraemar plainly demonstrates the problematic exigencies of the approval process:

> I have worked on numerous licensed titles in my career and have found that most of the bad licensed games are created because the publisher or holder of the license wants specific items in the game that don't work well in an interactive experience. For licensed properties, everything must be approved by numerous parties and may take a long time to get the team the information they need to move forward. Imagine creating six months of work on a driving engine and then you get the feedback back from the publisher or license holder, "Oh, the main character never drives a car in the movie, so could you take that out?" (as cited in Hall, 2011, p. 34)

Elkington makes clear the constraints and requirements associated with the practice of film-to-game adaptation, whereby media convergence creates negative synergy which complicates the process of releasing a game within the timeframe given. The adaptation model discussed next incorporates a number of the factors Elkington discusses, developing a framework for games that exploit a movie license without creating a significant engagment with the property.

Extrapolation Model: The Smokescreen of The License

Many of the factors considered in this chapter surrounding issues of badness in film-to-game adaptation are embodied in the Extrapolation Model. Games exhibiting this model

embody a tangential[70] or simplified[71] relationship to the source film, to the effect that the spirit or essence of the hypotext is highly diffused or even altogether absent. The Extrapolation Model shares certain characteristics with Hall's third category of film-to-game adaptation which he defines as "products in milieu established or created by film, but not expressly related to established filmic narrative" (2011, p. 43). In terms of Andrew's (1984) three concepts of adaptation, Extrapolation Model games utilise his mode of "borrowing," the most loosely based form of adaptation. The Extrapolation Model can exhibit the following characteristics: games may present abstracted characters,[72] scenarios, locales, or stylistic elements from the source film; may omit specific elements from the source film and render these in a generic fashion; there may be a tonal and or thematic mistranslation of the source; the game's title is either the title of the film or a close variant of it, and is prominently featured.[73] The Extrapolation Model demonstrates how publishers have frequently released poor quality games using the smokescreen of licensed titles of big-budget Hollywood films.

Extrapolation Model games are frequently referred to as shovelware and throughout game history, an important home for these games has been on handheld devices.[74] This is due to such factors as lower budgets, shorter development times, lower risk and lower expectation of quality. In contemporary times, mobile games are a prime example of extrapolation adaptations, and are similarly affected by technical limitations, but they can also be seen as a more commercially viable option than a title released on an 8th generation console due to lower production costs. One of the major reasons for mobile games being attached to a bad object stigma is the pernicious strategy of free-to-play

[70] The well-regarded *S.T.A.L.K.ER.: Shadow of Chernobyl* (THQ, 2007) has tangential connections to Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 philosophical science fiction film *Stalker* (see Sakey, 2010). This game is an atypical example of the model, demonstrating that the Extrapolation Model is not limited to poor quality film-to-game adaptations.

[71] One example of extrapolation adaptation would be the 1985 *Blade Runner* game for the Commodore 64 and ZX Spectrum (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5vzjFu4hh8). As the title screen states, the game is a "Video game interpretation of the film score by Vangelis."

[72] See Aldred (2012).

[73] Direct identification and association with the source film is of crucial importance to the function of the tie-in as a commercial entity.

[74] It may be argued that the term tie-in relates most directly to games that fall within the Extrapolation Model as the game may use the value of the film's title or selected elements from the property. The simultaneous release of the extrapolation game adds to the wider merchandising and marketing of the hypotext film.

payment mode. It may be seen that the existence of movie-licensed games on mobile devices are confluences of two bad objects.

The Extrapolation model of adaptation involves significant application of the adaptation strategies discussed in Chapter 2 such as addition and elision. Hypotextual spaces may be simplified to the point of abstraction. Characters (including central characters) may be omitted entirely from the game hypertext, but even the included characters may promote a lack of identification with the player. Extrapolation Model adaptation may avoid events from the source film altogether or cherry-pick certain events (perhaps with little regard for the plot sequence of the source film). As we have seen in Chapter 2, the concept of fidelity is a central concern to adaptation studies, and a lack fidelity to the source material is at the heart of the matter with Extrapolation Model games. Tonal mistranslation can be an example of this, as the player's experience of the game adaptation does not accord aesthetically or emotionally with that of the film experience on which it is based (i.e. *Jaws* [LJN, 1987] doesn't feel like the movie-version of *Jaws*).

A game exhibiting Extrapolation Model traits may take place in the "universe" of the property but it may be unclear as to when in the fictional timeline the events of the game take place in relation to the film events. Here we may draw upon a concept discussed in Wolf (2012b) in relation to imaginary worlds. Drawing from the term "utopia" (which literally means "no place"), Wolf cites Charles Renouvier's term "uchronia" which describes an unspecified or vague fictional time period in which a story is set, usually in the far future or distant past (2012b, pp. 95–96). Employment of uchronical time may produce a type of obfuscation in that the player is unclear as to the temporal relationship between game and film. An Extrapolation Model game that is lacking in adaptive continuity, actively avoids temporal coherence. There is the potential for the game to mash together elements, not only out of synchronisation with the source film, but in a completely invented timeline. These games may create an "imagined moment" by virtue of a "what if?" scenario. These are games that do not necessarily make sense in terms of the source film and its timeline of events. A game that employs uchronical time may lead the player to continue to attempt to make temporal connections as the game progresses, or to simply accept the game's uchronical temporal strategy.

This study proposes three main models of film-to-game adaptation. The Extrapolation Model is beyond the scope of the thesis due to the abstract nature of the hypotext's relationship to the hypertext when compared with the other three models; Reflection, Extension, and Intersection are involved with sequence elements, but Extrapolation sits alone. Extrapolation Model games may position themselves as Reflection, Intersection, or Extension Model adaptations but due to their tangential or simplified relationship to the source film, they are considered to be in a separate category.

This chapter has focused on concepts of badness and the bad object associated with film-to-game adaptation and how poor-quality is an enduring characteristic of the movie-licensed game. It is important to consider the landscape of film-to-game adaptation before investigating the significance of well-regarded instances of movie-license games as examined in the case studies. In Chapter 5 I explain the framework for the analysis of the case studies that illustrate the three models that are a product of this thesis.

Chapter 5.

Adaptation Model Framework

This chapter outlines the methodology used to investigate the case studies analysed in the following chapters. The justification for the methodology used in this thesis is to determine the particular adaptation that individual games exhibit. In an effort to provide coherent investigation, the study creates a framework employing three registers of analysis: textual, contextual, and paratextual analysis. This chapter explains what these registers are and how they contribute to understanding film-to-game adaptation.

The various permutations of relationships between texts are assessed here, taking into account the origin and system of associated authorised texts to the game hypertext and film hypotext. As part of this examination, the thesis carefully locates case studies within the larger franchise, allowing for a clear view of the connections between related texts, which is termed "transmedia state." Most film-to-game adaptations exist in a complex entertainment supersystem (Kinder, 1991) in which the film hypotext may itself be an adaptation from another medium, or even an adaptation of an adaptation.

The selected case study examples of film-to-game adaptations are critically analysed in an effort to encompass the range of practice throughout game history. The Case Study Comparison Overview (Table 5) provides a breakdown of all the factors considered within the framework designed by this research, and gives an overview of conditions germane to understanding the case study's position within each model. As we delve into the process of determining the models and the case studies, it is important to note that this journey provided a cross-pollination of ideas and decisions; as different case studies were considered, the shape, boundary, and significance of the models changed. As the models gained definition, this led to deeper questioning as to the relevance and function of each case study, and indeed the wider scope of the thesis. In all cases considered, there was a set intention to find games that exhibited various sequence elements based on internarrative theory. Consideration for these models worked in both directions: both playing the game and making connections to the film and the reverse, considering the

general to the specific, and vice versa. Playing different games and considering general trends led to the models, but then also led to re-categorisation of various games as the models became more specific. To further explain the approach, and the categorical breakdown in the creation of these models, I will detail the critical analysis involved.

The first section identifies the various approaches to the critical analysis of videogames, including the heritage of scholarship drawn from existing critical analysis of other media, specifically other screen media, and in particular, that of film and television. From there I will introduce the models and offer an overview of the case study selection process. Finally, I will lay out the framework created.

CASE STUDY COMPARISON OVERVIEW

	Release date	Film Production Involvement	Develop-ment: Sim/ Non Sim.	Release: Sim / Non Sim.	MobyRank / Metacritic score	Adaptation System	Sequence Element	Game Genre	Character Model Likeness	Original Voice Actor
REFLECTION										
GoldenEye 007	1997	Limited	S - NS	NS	93 / 96	A1	Mirrorquel	FPS	Y	n/a
LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	2006	Some	NS	NS	80 / 82 (360) 81 / 84 (PS2)	A1	Mirrorquel	3rd person action	**	n/a
INTERSECTION										
Blade Runner	1997	Some	NS	NS	87 / na (PC)	B1	Paraquel	Point-and-click Adventure	Y	Some
EXTENSION										
The Thing	2002	Limited	NS	NS	83 / 78 (Xbox) 77 / 78 (PS2)	B1	Direct Sequel	3rd Person Shooter / Survival Horror	N	N
The Warriors	2005	Limited	NS	NS	84 / 84 (PS2) 82 / na (Xbox)	B	Prequel + Reflection	3rd Person Action	Y	Y
Alien: Isolation	2014	Limited	NS	NS	80 / 81 (PC) na / 79 (PS4) na / 77 (XOne)	A1	Interquel	3rd Person Survival Horror	Y	Y

Table 5. Case Study Comparison Overview

Film-To-Game Adaptation Model Determination

From the early stages of this research, the intended models of film-to-game adaptation always included what eventuated in the finalised version: The Reflection Model, the Intersection Model, and the Extension Model. Considering what parameters were to make up these models and how the models could be extended, led to various other models being included, explored, and eventually excluded from the study, but this process of rumination led to a more defined understanding of the original three. For example, at a much earlier point in the thesis I had intended to incorporate "unlicensed games," but this was a category error, as these games reject licensing laws entirely and are thus free from industry pressures so influential to my case studies. The study initially included a cross-section of poor-quality adaptations providing a sense of progression across the decades, including the 1980s release *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Atari, 1982); the 1990s game *The Fifth Element* (Activision, 1998), the 2000s adaptation of *Charlie's Angels* (Ubisoft, 2003), and the 2010s game *Star Trek* (Namco Bandai Games, 2013). Whilst the comparative value of these low-quality works against remarkable ones held significance, it was found that the study gleaned more insight from considering successful forms of the process rather than cases of failure.

Two other models were defined, populated, and then discarded in the return to the original three. These were the Amalgamation Model and the Extrapolation Model. Relatively late in the stage of writing, toys-to-life games made an appearance and these were comprehensively explored in the Amalgamation Model, however it was ultimately discovered that Amalgamation is a different type not consistent with the features of the other models. Likewise, Extrapolation was deemed inconsistent with the other models as it was dependent on having a distant connection to the source property, and it was found this could either be re-categorised to fit into the Extension model (such as *KotOR*), or that a true Extrapolation Game (such as *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*, 2007) was not beholden to the license in the same way as the other models, and thus was not constrained by the same pressures.

Chapters 6–8 explicate each of the three decisive models: The Reflection Model, the Intersection Model, and the Extension Model. For each model, case studies were chosen as they exemplify the proposed model's characteristics, and additionally the selection of case studies demonstrate significant variations within the model. Cases are also explored in terms of comparison, highlighting similarities and variations of different models.

Case studies within each of the adaptation model chapters are differentiated according to a combination of contextual, paratextual or textual factors, and have been chosen based on different permutations of these factors. Not all factors will be relevant in determining case study differentiation—for example, the concept of seriality is not relevant when considering the Reflection Model case studies. Within this model, temporal expansion and addition may take place: major events drawn from the source film become game levels or sequences in which the player may either re-enact said major events, or play through combinations of events or the environments in which events take place. In cases that exemplify the Intersection Model, the game's narrative may parallel the film's narrative, or it may invent alternate events or outcomes that are necessary for the internal logic of the game's narrative.

The three film-to-game adaptation models are generated in accordance with the way the models approach narrative and internarrative theory including narrative architecture and world-building. Interactivation and game mechanics associated with game genre do not determine the model, but they do contribute to the particular form of game adaptation. For instance, reflection games mainly include the characters found in the source film; intersection games may have characters from the source film, as may extension games. However, it is also possible that extension games may exclude all characters from the source film, whereas this is generally not the case in intersection games.

Theory gleaned from adaptation studies mainly applies to the Reflection Model (as well as Amalgamation games that fulfil these characteristics) as these film-to-game adaptations incorporate the source film in the most extensive manner, either representing actual sequences from the source film, or in the case of the Intersection Model, negotiating around events from the film. Both the Extension Model and the Intersection Model align with Wolf's concept of "transmedial growth" (as discussed in

Chapter 2). For this reason, they are heavily dependent on transmedia concepts such as internarrative theory, as games determined to be extensions rely on seriality as the textual basis for their relationship to the source film property.

Case Study Selection

In choosing the case studies, I began with a list of titles that were renowned in both the game industry and game culture as high-quality movie-licensed games.[75] These titles were considered by virtue of their prominence in discussions of the phenomena incorporating a cross-section of platforms—PC, console, and arcade—and the first step was to play through these games and get a sense of what particular insights their analysis would bring to the study. Some were rejected as they were deemed too similar, either in form or genre, to another case study, or because the insights provided were not unique. Others were excluded because the amount of data available—in terms of accessible development materials or critical review—was too scant to offer significant results. Extensive research was enacted for more case studies than were eventually included, and some of these are shown in Table 6—the Case Study Companion Overview—Earlier Iteration.[76]

As these games were considered and contrasted, the aim for the final cross-section of case studies shifted as different aspects were revealed. At first, the goal was to include a consistent range of entries per model, and at another stage it was to have a major case study with minor examples. However, it was found that with the requisite equal investment into each case study's cross section of data, there was no satisfying way to reduce the detail of case studies in this way. Further, as I looked closer at these games, I found that the results did not yield significantly different amounts of information across a selection of three games as opposed to one in depth analysis, and so the focus shifted to including games that had the most worthwhile insights to offer in terms of the adaptation process. For example, the interquel was a problematic categorisation, thus *Alien: Isolation* was of particular value to exemplify this kind of game. The particular titles were chosen based on a combination of frequency of discussion in existing

[75] This was based on the totality of secondary research for this thesis.
[76] Note that this table has omitted some information for readability.

scholarship, and representation of intrinsic excellence measured by their critical reputation. Case studies are emblematic of variations of approaches within each model.

CASE STUDY COMPARISON OVERVIEW – EARLIER ITERATION

	Release date	Film Production Involvement	MobyRank / Metacritic score	Adaptation System	Sequence Element	Game Genre
REFLECTION						
Peter Jackson's King Kong	2005	Considerable	79 / 84 (360) 80 / 82 (PS2)	B1	Mirrorquel	Action adventure FPS
INTERSECTION						
The Godfather: The Game	2006	Some	78 / 77 (360) 85 / 70 (PS2)	B1	Paraquel	3rd Person Action, Racing
EXTENSION						
The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay	2004	Considerable	89 / 90 (PC) 88 / 89 (Xbox)	A1	Direct Prequel	First Person Action
Ghostbusters	2009	Considerable	80 / 79 (PS3)	A1	Sequel	Action
AMALGAMATION						
Disney Infinity 3.0 *Twilight of the Republic* *Rise Against The Empire*	2015	Considerable	81 (PS4) 78 (Xbox 360)	A1*	Interquel Multi-film Reflection adaptation	Action Adventure Toy box
EXTRAPOLATION						
Knights of the Old Republic	2003	Some	92 / 93 (PC) 93 / 94 (Xbox)		Distant Prequel**	RPG
S.T.A.L.K.E.R.	2007	None	81 / 82 (PC)			FPS / Survival Horror

Table 6. Case Study Comparison Overview–Earlier Iteration

Case Study Scope

Case study games selected for research were adapted from film properties directed mainly toward adult audiences, although large-scale surveys of film adaptations (Blanchet, 2010; Hall, 2011) reveal the majority of movie-licensed games have been based on mainstream entertainment films marketed to children and teenagers. The study's corpus comprises games made for consoles and PC, and excludes games made for mobile devices or tablets. It also omits massively multiplayer online games (MMOs). The cases selected represent a variety of approaches to film-to-game adaptation. Each game represents a particular relationship to its source film, such as narrative and internarrative form, game genre design implementation, and subsequent interactivation. Each case study game was chosen to exemplify a range of permutations within each model.

Quality

As film-to-game adaptations are generally associated with disreputability, a discussion of videogames exhibiting this characteristic was dealt with in Chapter 4, leaving the main study devoted to games that have garnered a positive reception by critics and players. The games selected exhibit a level of critical esteem, scholarly attention, and are considered significant examples of the movie-licensed game. The case study games chosen for this dissertation are, as Brown and Krzywinska (2009) say in relation to *Goldeneye 007* and *PJKK*, "exceptions to the rule" (p. 89). The reasoning for this approach is to examine the rare instances of intrinsic quality in an area of adaptation that is synonymous with failure, in an effort to identify consistency and continuity of transmediation.

Period of Release

The games selected span eighteen years of videogame history (1997–2015), from the fifth generation of videogame consoles to the current eighth generation. Games prior to the fifth console generation were not selected, as movie-licensed games of this earlier period generally exhibit a tangential or simplified relationship to the source film. Tavinor (2009) points to games made during later generations of game history as exhibiting what he refers to as a "sophistication" of game form. This allows for the potential of a more sophisticated representation of the source film compared with games from early game history. Importantly, the fifth console generation saw the emergence of three dimensional environments in games which was a significant factor in terms of adapting cinematic space into game space.

Framework Determination

Initially, the methodology for the study was to be an exclusively textual affair with a very heavy emphasis on narratological analysis. However, during the confirmation meeting, two key questions were posed that greatly shifted the emphasis of the study: 1) "How do these games come to be made?" and 2) "What is the intention of the creators?" Contemplating these questions led to the decision to incorporate an industrial contextualization in order to consider the heavy pressures involved in the games' development. Verevis's 2006 book on remakes incorporates the industrial and the

critical in addition to the textual, and this approach was extended to create the framework that similarly goes beyond textual analysis alone. It was determined that contextual and paratextual factors provide an additional and therefore more nuanced level of insight into the nature of the adaptation.

The Case Study Analysis Framework

Three registers of analysis are used to interrogate cases that demonstrate adaptation models—textual analysis, contextual analysis, and paratextual transmediality. These three registers are chosen to give insight into creative intention, expectation, reception, adaptation lineage, transmedia state, and particular textual strategy (Figure 7).

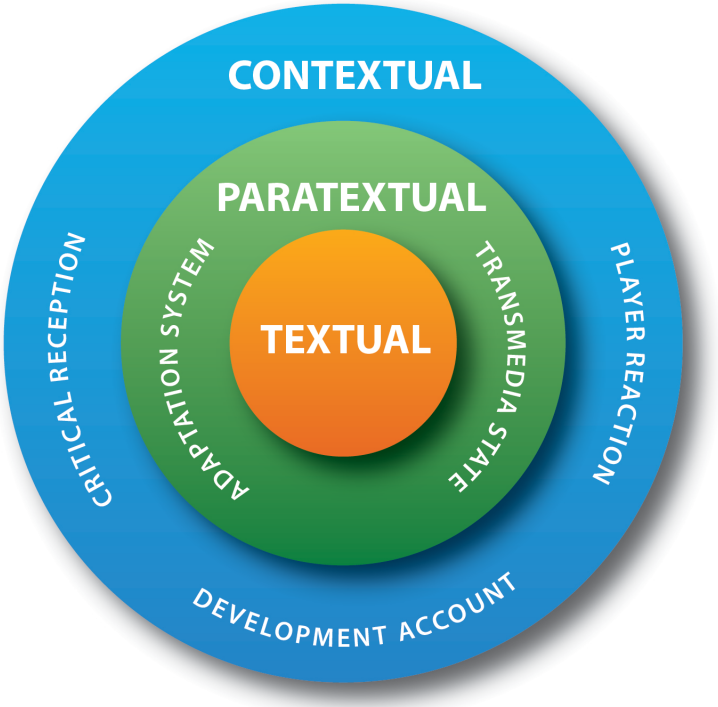

Figure 7. Three Registers of Analysis

To clarify certain terminology used in this study, "context" is broadly defined here as commentary surrounding the game. According to Gray (2010) however, these same factors would be considered media paratexts, while "paratext" in this study is limited to potential sources from which the game adaptation may draw during the adaptation process, as well as the position of the game in relation to all existing texts in the series.

The Reflection Model depends upon traditional concepts of adaptation as articulated in Chapter 2, whilst games that fall under the Intersection and Extension Models are primarily based on the game's quality as a sequence element in a series.

Textual Factors

Each case study game is textually analysed in light of a source film or film series, such that the focus of each case study is the specific nature and approach to adaptation. The case study textual analyses primarily identify and examine three factors germane to adaptation: narrational form and structure, world-building, and interactivation, including gameplay and game genre elements. The decision to concentrate on these three aspects of textual interest is due to the potential outcomes that examining these factors could elicit with regard to both the application of theories of adaptation, and the particular formal characteristics of videogames as a medium. As such, the framework for formal analysis draws directly upon material presented in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis. The major adaptation strategies as identified in Chapter 2 (see Table 2) are considered with regard to each case study.

The textual intersections of films and games locates a formalist analysis of both film and game form, and narrative, and this formalist analysis occurs through a process of comparative film viewing and game playing. As Mayra (2008, pp. 165–167) indicates, "analytical play" may involve various strata of engagement. This study involves both what Mayra denotes as "structural gameplay analysis" and "thematic analysis" of games.

This study incorporates methodologies employed in literature-to-film adaptation, investigating scene-by-scene comparative analysis, and drawing upon various perspectives in literature and media analysis. Distilling essential characteristics of long-form media properties requires a particular method of investigation, and considering Jacobs's (2012) critical analysis of the television series *Deadwood* (2004–2006)

provides inspiration.[77] Other recent scholarship on the textual analysis of film and television series such as Jacobs and Peacock (2013), and Clayton and Klevan (2011), are useful in considering the complexities of style and form.

Textual Adaptation Analysis Methodology: Process

Each case study was subjected to a textual analysis which includes a study of the property's source film and the game adaptation. These analyses identified salient characteristics relating to narrative, aesthetics, genre, tone, and theme. The overarching focus of each textual analysis was to determine the nature of the work as an adaptation. Several key questions guided this investigation: 1) What is the general relationship between the game and the source film or series? 2) Does the game present incidents and events from a source film, or is it positioned as an additional sequence element in a series? 3) What textual strategies and techniques are employed in this game in relation to the source film or film series? 4) What particular version of adaptation model does the work exemplify based on textual evidence?

The first complication to tackle with the game adaptation was determining which version of the game should be analysed; in a number of cases there are alternative versions, remakes, remasters, or "reimaginings" of the game adaptation.[78] The author acknowledges that versions developed or ported to other consoles or platforms may contain certain variances from one to the other. The study clearly indicates which version was analysed in each case.[79]

The process of analysing each case study game entailed three approaches: author's gameplay, recorded gameplay, and official game guides. Entire playthroughs were conducted for most games, however, in cases where this was not achieved, a significant amount of gameplay was undertaken to achieve a cognizant sense of kinesthetic

[77] In his monograph, Jacobs writes a detailed critique limited to only a couple of minutes of screen time while the entire series evolves over 34 hours. He approaches the analysis of such a text by distilling key themes circulating around particular central characters.

[78] Remakes in themselves can be considered a type of adaptation, and the phenomena of remaking and remastering games are areas suitable for further scholarly investigation in terms of adaptation.

[79] In the case of *GoldenEye 007* (1997) for the Nintendo 64, a Wii version was released with the same title in 2010 and then subsequently PS3 and Xbox 360 versions were released under the title *GoldenEye 007 Reloaded* in 2011. It is not a condition of this study to interrogate every version of game adaptation, rather the thesis selects the initial release version. Therefore, in the case of *GoldenEye 007* it is the 1997 Nintendo 64 release that is analysed.

involvement and physical engagement of each game. Subsequently, analysis of Let's Plays (see Hale, 2014), also known as Long Plays, for each of the case study games on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo was undertaken. Published game guides[80] were consulted during "study play"[81] as well as during review of recorded gameplay footage. One of the main conditions of selection was "no player commentary present" on the soundtracks, so that the Let's Play could be analysed in their original presentation. Some Let's Plays for entire games consisted of one large file (as in the case of *Alien: Isolation*), while others existed in multiple parts.

Each case study begins with a short factual textual synopsis, which functions to establish the central plot points and characters of both film source and game adaptation, to clearly situate the analysis to follow. In cases where multiple film entries exist in the franchise, the thesis provides a synopsis of the source film that the game primarily draws from, or, in the case that the game draws from multiple films, the thesis provides a synopsis for the franchise's key characteristics. The textual synopsis only deals with the key story events rather than the plot structure, which will be dealt with in the "narrative form" section. The textual synopsis is followed by a short case study introduction, in which the game is positioned in terms of its reputation, influence, scholarly interest, and its relationship to the franchise to which it belongs.

The textual analysis proper, begins with a section on narrative form in which the formal narratological qualities of each case study game are analysed in terms of plot structure and narration. The game's relationship to the events and characters of the film's narrative is identified and discussed. Issues concerning the large-scale relative timeline of the events presented in the game to the source film or film series, is dealt with in the section on seriality in the paratextual analysis. Focus is given to the game's structure and narrative temporality, as well as to the game's approach to narration, described by Bordwell (2008) as "the moment-by-moment flow of information about the story world" (p. 90). In this section, issues of plot development, manipulation of narrative order, duration, and frequency, and the degree to which narrative subjectivity is

[80] Bogenn (2011), Cain (1997), Hodgson (2006), Hodgson and Meston (2003), Kolmos (2002), Littlefield (2006), *Peter Jackson's King Kong-The Official Game of the Movie-Official Strategy Guide* (2006), *The Warriors-Official Strategy Guide* (2006).

[81] "Study play" refers to the process of recording descriptive and analytical observations during gameplay for the purposes of critical analysis.

employed, are identified. Jenkins's (2009b, 2009c) model of narrative architecture features in understanding how the nature of linear cinematic narrative is adapted into game form. This leads to the section on world-building, in which case study games' approach to transmedial imaginary worlds including strategies of environmental storytelling are articulated. It must be acknowledged that the concept of environmental storytelling is embedded in that of narrative architecture.

It should be reiterated that the ludological core of games is foregrounded throughout the case studies. In terms of adaptation, this manifests primarily through interactivation as discussed in Chapter 2. To restate, according to Wolf (2012b) "interactivation" refers to the process of adding interactive elements to a non-interactive text (pp. 260–262). This process is achieved primarily via game mechanics. Here, the codes and conventions of game genres are privileged, along with how these inflect the game adaptation. Issues of a game's core mechanics, player agency, and the intersection of game narrative and mechanics come into play.

The analysis of the aforementioned formal textual factors give insight into interrogating and interpreting tonal and thematic shifts in the game adaptation from the cinematic source. To what extent does a movie-licensed game's genre affect the nature and texture of the adaptation? The approach to tone and theme in the adaptation is in some ways determined by game genre selection. It is argued that the choice and implementation of game genre may produce radical tonal shifts away from the source of the adaptation, while in other instances, game genre may produce a consolidation of the essence of the source. Hall (2011) notes that:

> While the types of genres most often seen in film-to-game adaptations are usually influenced by the source material (i.e., an action adventure film will usually be translated into an action adventure game), this is not always the case, and film-to-game adaptations that are typically regarded as successful are those which do not adhere to such obvious translation. (p. 40)

The process of interactivation is inextricably linked to game mechanics, which is in turn wedded to a game's genre characteristics. It can be said that choice of game genre will form the parameters of a set of game mechanics that interactivate a source film.

Therefore, to a certain extent, the way in which a film is interactivated is dependent on a game's genre. The default position for a majority of film-to-game adaptations is that of the action-adventure genre (Arsenault, 2014). This genre is in many ways the most direct co-relative to the medium of film and especially action cinema. Further, the action-adventure game is attuned to third person avatar-based diegetic exploration and activity.

Contextual Factors

Contextual analysis (Figure 8) aims to investigate the following questions:

> How did developers / publishers / license holders view the game in relation to the film?
> How did reviewers view the game in relation to the film?
> How did players view the game in relation to the film?

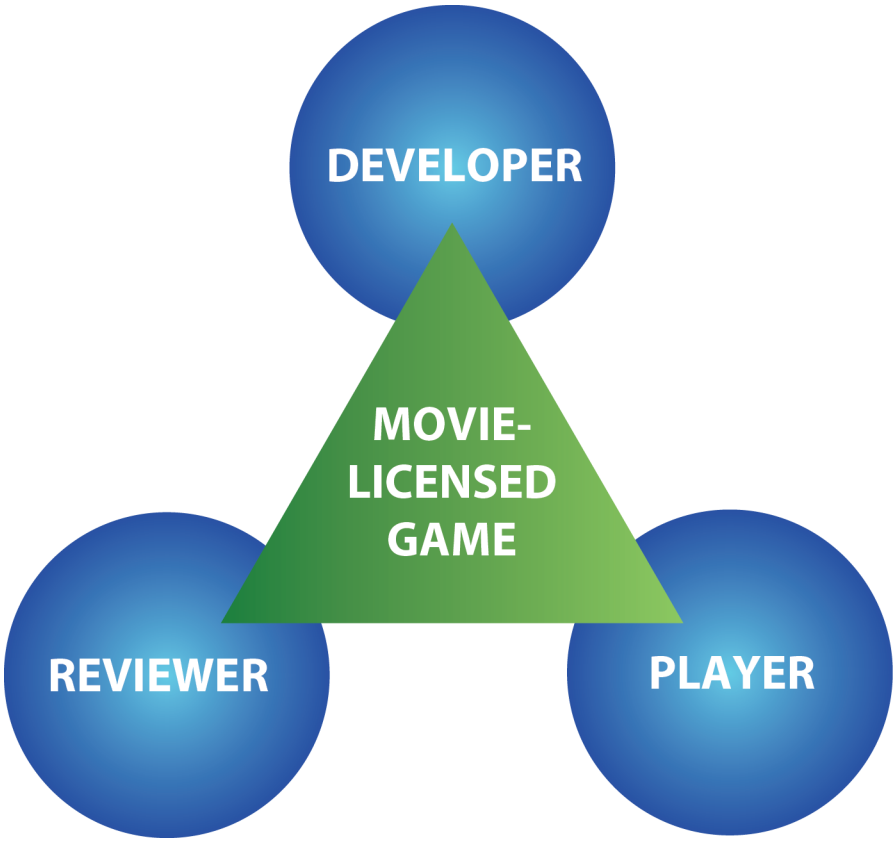

Figure 8. Contextual Analysis Factors

Contextual Analysis Methodology: Process

Development Account Process

Industry sources and academic works were investigated to find accounts of game development from the creators of the case study games. Interviews on gaming websites provide some insight as to the development process, as well as game retrospectives at the Game Developers Conference (GDC) in the case of *GoldenEye 007*. These retrospective pieces delve into the development process long after the game's success and critical acclaim, tending to yield more unguarded creative accounts and thus clearer insights into the decision-making process. Data was gleaned from both contemporaneous and non-contemporaneous sources. In most cases, information regarding actual licensing deals is heavily guarded under commercial-in-confidence regulations or contracts, and therefore this information is unavailable to the researcher.

Thus, non-contemporaneous accounts hold particular value in terms of historical clarity when looking back at the making of the game, as the historical distance of these sources may provide a more forthcoming account of the development process. In terms of the developers, to what extent do they claim to know the license? Implicit and explicit knowledge is an important consideration, as is consideration of how his knowledge is communicated through developer accounts.

Critical Reception Process

A strategic approach was employed to gather critical reception data. Major reputable critical game sources were accessed to find the contemporaneous reviews for each game, including *Edge* magazine*, Gamespot*, *Game Informer*, *Game Trailers*, *Electronic Games Monthly*, *IGN*, and *Eurogamer*. Non-contemporaneous reviews are included where applicable; notable examples are *Edge* magazine's *Time Extend* feature articles, as well as excerpts from Mott (2010). More than a dozen reviews were examined for each game. *Metacritic* and *MobyGames* scores, whilst problematic,[82] provide a quantitative indication of the critical assessment of the game in relation to all other

[82] See Kato (2009) and Abbott (2010).

games. Where possible, an attempt is made to establish the position of the reviewer with regard to the property: for instance, does the reviewer indicate that they had seen the source film prior to playing the game and did they have an expectation of the game adaptation?; were they fans of the property and how did this inflect their critical evaluation of the game as adaptation as well as the game as game?

Player Reception Process

The approach to collecting player reaction was initially intended to include comments responding to critical reviews and feature stories, however, in the vast majority of cases, it was found that these comments simply didn't exist. It was determined that the method gleaning the most insight into player perspective on these works came from reading *MobyGames* user reviews as well as the user comments attached to the game on *Metacritic*. Notably, the *MobyGames* user reviews are more akin to critical reviews than user comments. As with the critical reactions, an attempt is made to establish the position of the reviewer with regard to the property, and any insight into their evaluation of the game as adaptation. Milner's (2013) application of discourse analysis informs this process, in that user comments are assessed discerning particular themes through key terms to gather qualitative impressionistic data. For each case study, upwards of 100 comments were systematically collected, examined and excerpted.

Developer Accounts

Developer accounts provide insight into what developers and the license holders are intending to create with a film-licensed game, and how they have decided to actualise their vision. This includes information regarding the decisions they have made to translate the film to an interactive format, and why these decisions were made. One of the chief factors in considering the relationship between the film production and the development of the game adaptation, is the extent to which key creative individuals from the source film are involved with the game development process. The determination of this relationship is based on written accounts, published interviews, and industry commentary where available. In many instances, the researcher has inferred relationships based on impressions from the data, as clear lines of substantive involvement in production practices are difficult to determine. This inferred relationship is often murky at best, due to the industrial confidentiality of the development process,

in many cases becoming clear only through retrospective interviews and studies of the game. In any case, these relationships have been classified as either: “none,” “limited,” “some,” or “considerable,” in the Case Study Comparison Overview table (Table 5).

As Elkington (2009) points out, one of the major complications in game adaptation is coordination between the various production and development entities. When attempting to analyse this process of adaptation and to categorise said process into a particular model, the developers’ intentions offer insight into the decisions made and what they were hoping to achieve with the directions taken. These intentions are not always so transparent, as the majority of development accounts were taken from interviews with the developers at the time of the game’s release, which are mostly linked to public relations strategies, rather than an in-depth consideration of the complexities of the production process. To a certain extent, the veracity of these perspectives must be called into question, due to the nature of the practical industrial realities of promoting the game at the time of release. The developers establish their intentions prior to the release of the game, but at release there may be a shift in these perspectives. There can only be a retrospective reflection on the game after significant time has passed. When considering the developer’s intention, focus is given to the kinds of terms or descriptors developers use to describe the intention of their game, for instance “The game is a spiritual successor to x,” or, “the game is a direct sequel to x,” or, “the game is set in an alternate timeline of x.”

There may be conflicting perspectives within development accounts among the developers, the license holders, and the publishers. These perspectives are not clearly enunciated and in fact may only be hinted at, as all parties aim to present a consistency of vision at the critical time of the game’s release. At times, this presentation of a uniform outlook may even be a contractual obligation. If the game turns out to be a “bad object,” more controversial opinions may emerge, for instance: the developers didn’t have enough time; the license holders didn’t allow enough creative freedom to let the developers exploit the license; or, developers may claim they couldn’t fulfil the contractual requirements as they initially set out during early pitch stages. One of the major aspects in the development process is the creative vision for the intended game, and the discrepancies in this vision that grow between various parties involved.

Critical Reception / Player Reception

The study combines both critical and player reception of each case study game into the same section. This is due to the discovery that there was a consistency in the nature of discussion from these two sources, and that to present these findings together provided more insight. It was determined that the most efficacious presentation of the data collated from these two sources was in table form. The data gathered is of an impressionistic nature, which presents evaluative thoughts regarding the game as a videogame, and more specifically the game as adaptation of the film property. The comments gathered are categorised around such topics as: "game as adaptation," "storytelling," "mood and atmosphere," "game mechanics," and "genre." Any commentary making reference to the familiarity of the source film prior to playing the game was included, indicating whether the player had an extensive knowledge of the source, or if the game was the first point of entry to the franchise. Comments were generally gleaned from the time of the game's release, and it was found that retrospective reflection on the game was generally seen in developer or critical accounts as opposed to player-based accounts.[83]

A typical player and critical response would concern the overall look, feel or mood of the game in relation to the adapted film. For instance, one player response reads: "Visually speaking the game nails the look of the movie perfectly. The graphic artists were able to emulate the dark urban landscape created by Syd Mead and Ridley Scott in the original movie with aplomb" (Anonymous Gamer, 2005, n.p.). Here we can see an evaluative commentary relating to a general look, mood or feel, however, this gives limited insight into the ways in which the game functions as an adaptation. Few reviews were interpretative: in the wider body of the player comments surveyed, the vast majority of discussion centred around game mechanics. Since the primary focus of this study is adaptation, comments that did not relate to adaptation proper were excluded in each case study's contextual findings. The individual submitting user comments may be

[83] In most instances of the data gathered from both critical and player sources, there are significant errors with spelling, grammar and accuracy in titles of games and films. In the efforts of readability, the data has not been altered to correct these errors nor has the appropriate use of (*sic*) been applied.

a more discerning player, depending on their response. If commentary shows that a prior knowledge of the property exists, it is possible to infer the player or critic is more invested in the property.

Paratextual Factors

There are two interrelated factors here: "adaptation system" and "transmedia state." The adaptation system relates to texts produced prior to the release of the game and how these texts potentially influence the game adaptation. Transmedia state is concerned with the position of the game adaptation within the scope of all significant texts associated with the property, and unlike the adaptation system, includes works produced following the game's release.

Paratextual Analysis Methodology: Process

Paratextual analysis involves identifying the work within an adaptation system, as well as assessing its transmedia state. The adaptation system is a general scheme by which a movie-licensed game is related to various other textual entities within a property. Transmedia state refers to the identification and positioning of key texts in the current state of the property. It applies precepts of transmedia storytelling outlined by Jenkins (in addition to subsequent transmedia and internarrative theory promulgated by Wolf [2012b]), and the ways in which they operate in each of the film-to-game adaptation cases. The question posed here is: "How does the position of the game in the adaptation system affect the nature of the adaptation?"

Adaptation System

When positioning the game adaptation in the adaptation system, the primary concern is with texts produced prior to the release of the game[84] because they provide the elements from which the game adaptation can draw. For example, if the game is released in 2004 and a sequel to the film is released in 2006, this is of no consequence to the design and

[84] These paratextual categories do not take into account film or game sequels or prequels produced following the release of the game under analysis.

release of the game, since the future works cannot be seen to have impacted the game's development.[85]

Paratextual factors for this study are limited to what are considered to be significant instances with regard to the game adaptation. For example, when considering *GoldenEye 007* amidst the James Bond universe, there may be James Bond action figures that exist,[86] but they are considered outside of the scope of this study when analysing the adaptation process of *GoldenEye 007*. In comparison, LEGO playsets are seen to be significant when thinking about *Star Wars* as an adaptation into *LSWII.*

It is beyond the scope of the study to fully articulate the extent to which case studies have been influenced by works produced prior to the game adaptation. Rather, the adaptation system works to generally situate the case study in the wider franchise.[87] To consider the influence of prior works at a fine-grained level would require comparative analysis of each and every work pre-existing the game's development. For the purposes of this study, the most appropriate adaptation system is determined by contextual and textual analysis of the game and its most closely associated hypotext. In essence, the adaptation system is a simplified version of the actual practice of media property franchising. It is instructive to take Wolf's (2012b) lead in considering the complexity of paratextual relationships and the necessity for practical analysis:

> A discussion of transmedial growth should attempt to examine what occurs in the move across media. However, analyzing transmedial movements across every possible pairing of media would be a lengthy undertaking involving much overlap and repetition: a better approach is to look at each of the properties present in different media, their capabilities and peculiarities, and the process of using each as a window that reveals an imaginary world. (p. 248)

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[85] In the process of making the source film pre-production materials (including various drafts of the screenplay, art, location photos, test materials, and perhaps footage not used in the release version of the film) may be available. Decisions regarding if and how these materials will play a part in the game adaptation may be salient ones.

[86] It should be noted that Gray (2010) deals with both action figures and videogames alongside one another as playable paratexts.

[87] The presence of phenomena such as remakes is significant within the adaptation system, as a film remake may directly incorporate material from previous versions of a work, and therefore may then ultimately impact on the game adaptation (see Leitch [1990], Verevis [2006], and Loock & Verevis [2012]). These schemas have been brought to bear on the case study games that have been adapted from films that are in turn themselves remakes.

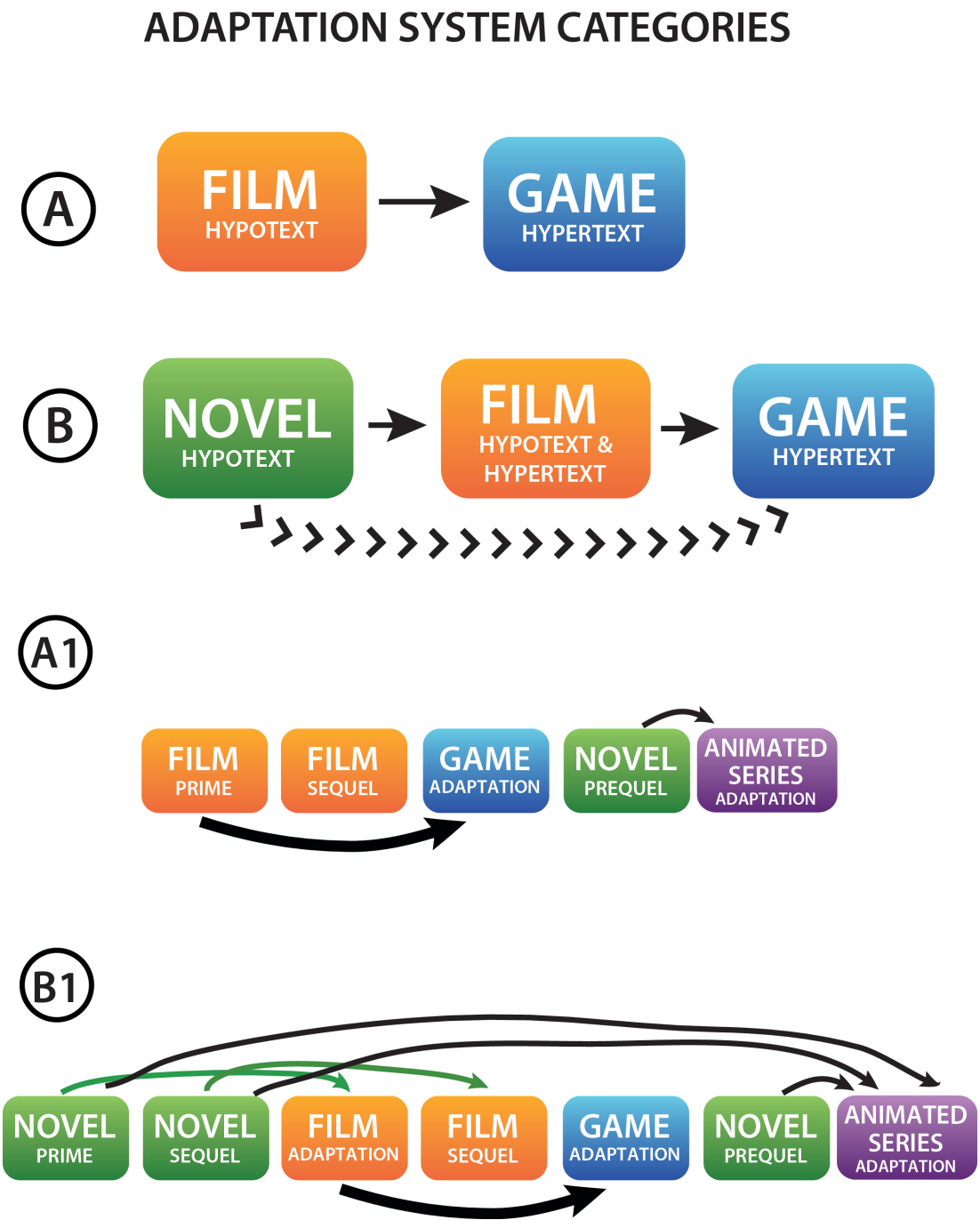

Figure 9. Adaptation System Categories

Here, arrows represent instances where the videogame exhibits Reflection and / or Intersection Model characteristics. Since Extension and Amalgamation Model case

studies exhibit transmedial growth, these game adaptations may not draw from one specific hypotextual source.

Adaptation System Categories

Four adaptation categories are proposed which are represented graphically in Figure 9. Note that the term "prime" refers to the first textual instance of a property. The system designed here relates directly to the instance of film-to-game adaptation, where the game is always adapted from a film.[88]

Adaptation System A

This system refers to a permutation where a game is adapted from a film that is an original work (an "original work" means a text not based on another work). Here, no other authorised works are based on this property except the film and the game adaptation (excluding any other works that may have been created after the game). Complications may arise even when an individual film is the source, for instance, various versions of a film (such as "director's cuts") may be publically available.

Adaptation System B

This system refers to permutation where a game is adapted from a film which is itself an adaptation. A commonly seen iteration is where a film is adapted from a novel, however, this could also exist when a film is a remake, or an adaptation of an adaptation.[89] A type B adaptation system invites the possibility of material from the original hypotext being incorporated into the game adaptation,[90] or alternatively, a condition of adaptive amnesia may exist where the game disregards the hypotext original.

e.g. *The Warriors* = original novel => film adaptation => videogame

[88] It is an important disclaimer that these categories could also apply in instances where the hypotext is not a film (for example a novel), however, this is outside of the scope of this study.

[89] When discussing adaptation, this system does not take into account "inspirations" from various sources, such as the 1958 Akira Kurosawa film *The Hidden Fortress* inspiring elements in *Star Wars* (1977).

[90] For example, in instances where a film is based on a novel, a scene existing in the original novel but omitted from the film adaptation may be incorporated in the game adaptation.

In the cases of A and B systems, only prime texts and adaptations of prime texts exist prior to the release of the videogame adaptation. In the cases of A1 and B1, not only do adaptations of the prime source exist prior to the game adaptation, but other sequence elements (and perhaps adaptations of these) exist such as in a series franchise.

Adaptation System A1

This system refers to a permutation where a game is adapted from a film that exists in a system of other texts of various media (such as film sequels or prequels, comics, television series, or web series), and the source film is an original work. For example, the videogame *Alien: Isolation* is part of a media franchise that began with the film *Alien* (Scott, 1979).

Adaptation System B1

This system refers to a permutation where a game is adapted from a film that exists in a system of other texts of various media (such as film sequels or prequels, comics, television series, or web series), and the source film is itself an adapted work. For example, the game *Blade Runner* (1997) is adapted from the film of the same title, that was originally adapted from a novel.

There are various questions that arise from a consideration of the adaptation system. For instance: To what extent does the game adapt aspects of the previous iterations of the property? If the game is an adaptation of a sequel to a film, to what extent does the game adapt the original film? If the game is the sequel to a film and is in turn a sequel to a movie game, to what extent is the game cognizant of the game adaptation of the original film?

Transmedia State

The Transmedia State refers to the position of the game adaptation within the scope of all significant texts associated with the property, including works produced after the game's release. Each case study is accompanied by a graphic that indicates its

transmedia state.[91] Each significant entry appears according to its media form and the relative time of release in relation to the other significant entries identified. Finally, each significant entry is identified in terms of its sequence element in relation to the original film hypotext.

One consideration is the evolution of sequence element status to an entry depending on subsequent entries to the franchise. For example, at the time of a particular entry's release, it may be considered a sequel. As the franchise develops, subsequent sequels render the first sequel to be an interquel. However, this thesis takes the approach of only labelling interquels when they are designed to be an interquel at the time of release. An example of this is seen with *Prometheus* (Scott, 2012), because at the time of its release the sequel film, *Alien: Covenant* (Scott, 2017) was planned and factored into the narrative for *Prometheus*.

One may argue that, by virtue of the existence of a game adaptation (independent of the film-to-game model) the game is an example of transmedia storytelling. That is, the game tells the story of the film property in its own way. When considering the example of the film-to-game adaptation, it is pertinent to question the extent to which the videogame draws on other texts in the property and exhibits transmedia storytelling properties.

This chapter explicates the process and construction of the framework of analysis which represents a significant contribution to film-to-game adaptation scholarship. By combining three registers of analysis, the framework provides a sophistication of investigation not possible via textual analysis alone. The following three chapters employ this framework in an effort to explicate each of the film-to-game adaptation models via case study analysis.

[91] Franchise entries post-2016 may not be included as the end of 2016 was the cut-off date. Significant entries known to be in development for 2017 release were incorporated into the graphics.

Chapter 6.

Model 1: Reflection Adaptation

Reflection Model Case Studies

GoldenEye 007 (Nintendo, 1997)

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (LucasArts, 2006)

Defining the Reflection Model

The first model I propose for categorizing and systemizing the complex practice of film-to-game adaptation is the Reflection Model. It builds on contributions by Brookey (2010), Elkington (2009), and Hall (2011) whilst drawing together existing research on adaptation theory. The Reflection Model is one the most common approaches to film-to-game adaptation (Elkington, 2009, p. 219)[92] in which the game hypertext seeks to represent the film hypotext in the most direct manner possible by retelling the hypotext's story. It is because of this key feature that games fitting into the Reflection Model may be considered as the most unambiguous version of film-to-game adaptation in the thesis.

All variations of Reflection Model adaptation present the major events of the hypotext as the basis for the adapted game, and in this way, a Reflection Model game has a relatively high level of fidelity in terms of the story events of the film hypotext. Considering existing theories of adaptation, the Reflection Model coincides with Wagner's (1975) theory of transposition adaptation and also Andrew's (1984) concept

[92] Elkington refers to "the 'direct adaptation,' in which a video game closely, even slavishly, follows the film narrative by directly turning film events into interactive experiences" (Elkington, 2009, p. 219).

of "borrowing" (p. 98) as discussed in Chapter 2. The Reflection Model positions itself within Wolf's (2012b) definition of adaptation rather than transmedial growth, in that these games are stories existing in one medium that are "adapted for presentation in another medium" (p. 245).

A Reflection Model game generally can be seen as closest to traditional ideas of adaptation which are more heavily based on textual issues, rather than displaying extensive aspects of transmedial storytelling. For instance, since Reflection Model games are directly based upon particular source films, the concept of internarrative sequence elements does not play a role as it does with the other models. In the absence of an existing applicable sequence element, this thesis proposes the term "mirrorquel" to apply to a Reflection Model game, creating a consistency with the internarrative sequence element "-quel" suffix terms, and demonstrating the reflective nature of the adaptation approach.

The textual factors significant in the Reflection Model pertain to narrative (story events, story world, and characters), and aesthetics (character likeness, original voice actors, and world-building design). In addition to presenting story events of the hypotext, Reflection Model games usually replicate the plot structure of the film, such that the game becomes a type of playable version of the source film.[93] They employ game structures that afford the player a relatively restricted mode of agency, playing through what Bateman (2007) refers to as a "gated story" whereby "the plot unfolds as a series of linear checkpoints that players unlock in sequence after having explored groupings of game sections in any order they choose" (pp. 74–75). Therefore, Reflection Model games do not lend themselves to open world game design paradigms.

Reflection Model games usually render the protagonist of the film as the playable character, enacting a narrative mimicry of the film's storytelling perspective. Cut-scenes in a Reflection Model game may also recreate scenes from the source film using the game engine, or even more directly, by splicing in scenes straight from the film, as in the case of the Electronic Arts *The Lord of the Rings* games. However, in a move

[93] 8-bit cinema's *Blade Runner* (2013) short film distils the film's key story events into an imaginary point-and-click videogame: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM6z9czN318

away from direct imitation, these games can employ traditional strategies of adaptation which alter the source text somewhat in the process of interactivation. Elongating sequences that appear in the hypotext is referred to as "expansion," and this term is concerned with expanding the time taken for a story event to unfold when compared with the time taken in the source film. Inventing minor bridging moments or sequences to connect spaces or events in the game adaptation, can be considered as employing an "addition" adaptation strategy. Other narrational factors such as duration, frequency, range of story information, and depth of story information may be altered due to the formal differences between cinema and videogames, but this is usually within the confines of the story events of the source film.

Although the Reflection Model exhibits a traditional textual refashioning, Wolf (2012b) would consider this a kind of transmedial adaptation where a more direct hypotext to hypertext relationship exists: "when a story existing in one medium is adapted for presentation in another medium, but without adding any new canonical material to a world" (pp. 245–246). Wolf's claim is problematic since any new version of a work will add to the material of the world to a greater or lesser extent. Due to the formal significance of world-building inherent in videogames, even a Reflection Model game will expand the material of the source film in some way.

Paradigmatic examples for illustrating the key features of the Reflection Model are *GoldenEye 007* and *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy*. In the following chapter I will describe in detail how the criteria defining the proposed Reflection Model are incorporated in the narrative form, world-building and interactivation of these critically acclaimed games.

Case Study: *GoldenEye 007* (Nintendo, 1997)

Reflection Adaptation of *GoldenEye* (Campbell, 1995)

Figure 10. Box Cover Art for *GoldenEye 007*

Textual Synopsis

GoldenEye (Campbell, 1995) is a James Bond film. In this instalment from the James Bond franchise, British secret agent James Bond (Pierce Brosnan) comes up against his former colleague who has gone rogue, MI6 agent Trevelyan. Trevelyan has overtaken major criminal organisation, Janus, and the GoldenEye satellite weapon along with it. Bond must stop him from using the satellite for the demise of Britain, by destroying the satellite facility.

GoldenEye 007 (Nintendo, 1997) is a first-person shooter (FPS) in which the player embodies Pierce Brosnan's James Bond, playing through missions mimicking the scenes from the source film.[94]

[94] For a comprehensive no commentary Let's Play (not from N64 but PC optimised 60fps) see Takumi85 (2015).

Case Study Introduction

Created by British developer Rare, *GoldenEye 007* for the Nintendo 64 is generally regarded as both the greatest movie-licensed game of all-time, and as the first exceptional console first-person shooter. Additionally, *GoldenEye 007* is significant for having pioneered a breakthrough in split-screen local multiplayer gameplay.[95] This regard for a film-to-game adaptation makes it highly anachronistic. Brown and Krzywinska (2009) isolate several reasons why *GoldenEye 007* has attained classic status: "Primarily, it was amongst the first console first-person shooter games to fully embrace analogue control in a 3D environment, allowing players greater immediacy and fluidity of movement within the game world" (p. 98). It may be argued that the reputation of the game is due far more to the split-screen multiplayer mode, rather than the nature of game's approach to adapting the source film.

The Bond film franchise is one of the most well-known and longest-running mainstream series in cinema history. It acts as a model reference point for popular entertainment properties, including high-profile videogame franchises. Many of the themes and motifs of the Bond films—espionage, gunplay, gadgets, technology, and plot structures designed to foreground action set pieces—share commonalities with certain videogame genres, namely, the first-person shooter and stealth-action genre. Due to said commonalities, the Bond property has been adapted into videogame form numerous times, and these games are of generally two types—games adapted directly from the feature films, and games that are unrelated to the novels or films but have licensed the Bond character and feature him as the main playable character.

This adaptation comes with the strong foundation of "the Bond heritage" of which the game makes great use. This Bond heritage has been recognised at the heart of other non-Bond properties, such as the *Metal Gear Solid* series (Konami, 1998–2015), and the *No One Lives Forever* series (Fox Interactive and Sierra Entertainment, 2000–2003), and indeed these series have been suggested to exemplify a more profound expression

[95] For *Edge* magazine's 20th anniversary in 2013, the publication retroactively awarded *GoldenEye 007* a coveted 10/10—a review score which had only been awarded 17 times in 20 years. See "The Ten Amendments" (2013, p. 77).

of the core Bond characteristics than many lesser regarded Bond videogame adaptations.[96] Critic Tony Mott (2010) cites this intertextual Bond connectivity: "You could argue that the title of Best James Bond Game ironically sits with three games that aren't actually about James Bond: *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Modern Warfare 2*, and *No One Lives Forever*" (p. 334). Here, Mott is referring to a type of homage and the successful adaptation of the *essence* of James Bond, rather than actual unlicensed adaptation. In this way, it is accepted that James Bond has a particular history with videogames, not only from official same name titles, but a palpable "Bond influence" that affects videogame design within the action adventure / shooter genre.

GoldenEye 007 was significant in the realm of the FPS genre as it was one of the first games where the player was afforded analogue control within a 3D space (Brown & Krzywinska, 2009, p. 98) as well as more options than the "running and gunning" of earlier FPS games such as *Wolfenstein 3D* (Apogee Software, 1992), *Doom* (GT Interactive, 1993), and *Quake* (GT Interactive, 1996). *GoldenEye 007* was a step away from these original FPS titles, in that traditional narrative elements were integrated into the game design. Pinchbeck (2009) deals with the purpose of story within the FPS genre, offering a rigorous and sustained argument considering how story operates as a function of gameplay within the FPS genre, including how worlds, avatars and NPCs contribute to ludic storytelling. While Pinchbeck doesn't discuss *GoldenEye 007* in his analysis concerning FPS games from 1998–2007, one may make the claim that elements of *GoldenEye 007*'s storytelling have bearing on Pinchbeck's later period of analysis.

It should be noted that there are multiple versions of this game. The status of *GoldenEye 007* is such that in 2010, an identically titled remake was released on the Nintendo Wii in an attempt to capitalise on the reputation of the 1997 release. A further remastering was released the following year for the Xbox 360 and PS3 consoles titled *GoldenEye 007 Reloaded* (Nintendo, 2011). The 2010 remake of the game is significant, as highly regarded screenplay author of the source film, Bruce Feirstein collaborated as writer. By this stage in his career, Feirstein was heavily invested in the Bond franchise, having also written Bond films *Tomorrow Never Dies* (Spottiswoode, 1997) and *The World is Not*

[96] The aforementioned games incorporate themes and mechanics associated with the espionage / spy genre, distilling aspects of the of the Bond formula.

Enough (Apted, 1999). Further to this, he was involved in two other Bond videogame adaptations: *James Bond: From Russia With Love* (EA, 2005) and *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing* (EA, 2003). One of the key differences with the 7th generation versions of the game is the substitution of key cast members (including the actor portraying Bond) to bring the game into line with the contemporaneously released Bond films. McGowan (2013) considers the conflated reputation of the game, and where the lines between the two significant releases should be drawn. Considering the question as to what actually comprises the "GoldenEye experience," McGowan writes:

> GoldenEye Wii does not reproduce or derive itself from the earlier game's source code. Does this, then, make it more of a remake than an adaptation? Or, is it something else altogether? How might one describe the relationships between the film, the N64 game, and the Wii game? (para. 5)

McGowan's essay raises important questions regarding the idea of game remakes (or "reimaginings").[97] Regardless, in this instance the remakes of *GoldenEye 007* (the oldest amongst the case studies), is a testament to its significance in videogame history.

[97] Remakes and reimaginings may be considered particular types of adaptation. In relation to film remakes, Leitch (1990) argues: "remakes differ from other adaptations to a new medium because of the triangular relationship they establish among themselves, the original film they remake, and the property on which both films are based" (p. 139). Leitch draws a distinction between the remake and the sequel in that "the rhetorical stance of the two genres reflects their fundamentally different appeal. The audience for sequels want to find out more…[while]…the audience for remakes does not expect to find out anything new in this sense: they want the same story again, though not exactly the same" (p. 142). Leitch believes that remakes strive to not only position themselves alongside their originals but to appear better in several ways.

Textual Analysis

Narrative form

The adaptation techniques identified in the Reflection Model focus primarily on narrative and structural strategies, but they can also be seen as tonal, stylistic, and in a lesser way, ludic. *GoldenEye 007*'s structure is individual mission-based, comprising seven missions containing sub-sections. Each mission must be completed in order before the player is able to proceed to the next, exhibiting Bateman's (2007) gated story structure. At the beginning of each mission the player is given written background on the rationale for Bond's instructions, and a pretext for action. Bond's briefing dossier contains notes from M, outlining the objectives; from Q, regarding weapons and technology; and from Moneypenny, expressing her implicit feelings for Bond. The game incorporates all of the major characters and most of the minor characters from the source film, replicating the core drama between Bond and the antagonist Alec Trevelyan and his henchman, Xenia Onatopp.

GoldenEye 007 exemplifies a relatively high degree of reflection in terms of the events of the game corresponding to the events of the film. For the most part, the game's missions are designed around the plot structure of the source film with minor resequencing taking place. When considering the matter of point of view and focalisation, an issue arises where the adaptation is based on a film that varies in point of view. *GoldenEye 007* is a single character FPS game, and as such, only presents events from one character's point of view. This limitation results in narrative restrictiveness, and to deal with this, the game altered the film's story events to make sense being told exclusively from Bond's perspective. As Watson (2013) remarks:

> Instead of sticking strictly to James Bond's experience in the film, the developers spiced it up. Missions were either extended or modified in order for the player to have more participation in the story than he did. This showed that the team was not afraid to add additional elements to the story line even though they did stay true to references from the movie. (n.p.)

An example of this can be seen when considering the Severnaya sequence. In the film, the active agents are Boris the Russian general, and Natalya. Bond is not present in the

scene, rather he learns of the Severnaya events back at MI6 Headquarters. In the game, however, Bond infiltrates the facility (in the exact same way as he did in the game's Arkangelsk mission), meets Boris and Natalya, and then becomes the active agent. Thus it can be seen that whilst the approach to the adaptation displays a high degree of fidelity in the level of reflection, the game makes departures from the reflective nature to take into account the narrative restrictiveness created with the change in viewpoint. Due to the nature of Bond as the central FPS character, everything must revolve around Bond. From a visual standpoint, at beginnings of levels, a third person perspective of Bond can be seen. The game's viewpoint then immediately shifts to present the player with the literal first-person perspective for FPS gameplay, and helps to locate the player as embodying James Bond.

There are further instances in *GoldenEye 007* where the story events deviate from the film, in which either resequencing or addition takes place. In the first instance, the game's opening in "Mission 1: Arkangelsk" subsequently leads to a cinematic of Bond jumping from the top of the dam, rather than beginning with the dam as in the film. Narrative order generally follows the sequence as presented in the source film, however certain scenes have been added to the mission structure of the game, including section 1 of the Arkangelsk initial mission, the Kirghizstan launch silo sequence in Mission 3, and an additional flashback to the Severnaya space weapons complex in Mission 2. Expository scenes are generally elided, interpolating narrative information into mission briefings provided to the player with the commencement of each new gameplay sequence in the graphical form of a written dossier.[98]

The henchman character, Xena Onatopp is not a direct translation of her corresponding character from the film, and significant aspects of her characterisation are drawn from other henchmen in the Bond film franchise. Traditionally, the Bond henchman is a one-dimensional, iconic figure (particularly during the period of Roger Moore's residency), a trait set early in the Bond film franchise with the character of Oddjob in *Goldfinger* (Hamilton, 1964). Pussy Galore (also in *Goldfinger*) functions as a kind of secondary henchman, although her status as villain shifts over the course of the film as Bond

[98] At no stage do we see any of the three key MI6 supporting characters—Moneypenny, Q, and M—however, they are characterised in written form through these mission-briefing statements. Their tone is captured in the few sentences dedicated to them as merely "textual figures."

seduces her. Onatopp can be seen to draw from Oddjob and Pussy Galore, but the closest analogue is possibly May Day, the character played by Grace Jones in *A View to a Kill* (Glen, 1985). This female henchman character is psychoanalytically positioned as the "vagina dentata," reminiscent of the femme fatale of the film noir genre. In the film *Goldeneye*, Onatopp is rendered as a psychopathic sexually vociferous "foreign" creature. The major scenes she shares with Bond function thematically as a kind of sexual cat-and-mouse game: in an early car chase, Onatopp suggestively drives a red Ferrari; Bond and Onatopp face off over Baccarat in a Monte Carlo casino; and they eventually fight in a hotel spa fight. It is significant that the videogame adaptation completely omits all three of those sequences, leaving Onatopp to appear relatively late in the game (Mission 7: Cuba), essentially existing only in one sequence where Bond's encounter with her acts as a late stage boss battle. The entire erotic dimension of Onatopp is omitted from the game.

Sexuality and eroticism are among the most difficult themes to successfully present in videogame form (Brathwaite 2007), even on the relatively cartoonish level of the Bond franchise. Rendering intimacy is generally a clumsy endeavour in videogames, with the problematic challenge of translating human expression, nuance in performance, and innuendo into a digital interactive space with a comparative level of satisfaction to what we see in film. In his discussion of masculinity and boyhood in Bond films and games, Burill (2002) touches on the subject but doesn't offer any particular insights with regard to *GoldenEye 007*. Textual analysis reveals that romance and eroticism—one of the major thematic aspects of the Bond franchise—is almost exclusively absent from the game (except for the end credits jungle embrace between Bond and Natalya). It can be posited that the developer's decision to omit this theme may be due not only to the difficulty mentioned above, but also Nintendo's product regulations and broad target market.

On completion of the single player missions, the game moves beyond the source film in two bonus missions that include previous Bond villians: The Aztec Complex features Jaws from *Moonraker*, while in the Egyptian Temple mission, Bond battles Baron Samedi from *The Man with the Golden Gun* (Hamilton, 1974).[99]

[99] These and other Bond franchise character models are playable in the game's multiplayer matches.

Some commentators dispute the direct nature of the game's approach to adapting the source film. Mott (2010) points to the historical significance of the game, whilst viewing the adaptation as non-reflective in nature: "[*GoldenEye 007*] is the holder of the title Most Important Console First-Person Shooter… an adaptation that played fast and loose with the 1995 movie" (p. 334). Mott does not elaborate on his comment "fast and loose," but considering it in terms of the models, it can be posited that he views *GoldenEye 007* as an adaptation more along the lines of the Extrapolation Model. This is a difficult position to hold as the game clearly fits within the Reflective Model aside from a few instances discussed above. In a similar vein, Brown and Krzywinska (2009) argue that it "was more a case of this game finding its theme in the movie than attempting a direct adaptation from source" (pp. 98-99). This suggests that the design innovations preceded the development of the game, rather than using strategies to interactivate the film. The upcoming development account, however, clearly shows how the design team responsible for the game made conscious decisions to draw from the source film.

World-building

For a game of this time period there was a high level of reflection of the film's *mise-en-scéne* in the environment design of the game, not only with the central architecture, but in terms of general colour palette, décor, and set dressing details. The game retains all major locations from the film, with the addition of two invented locations (the Aztec Complex and the Egyptian Temple) featured in the two bonus missions. Crucially, the development team cites their increasing access to the film production materials as a crucial contribution to the feel of the world as designer Martin Hollis explains:

> In terms of materials from the film we had very little to begin with, we had an early shooting script which was lovely to thumb through and it gave us a lot of information about what they were *planning* in the film but we didn't know what they were actually going to shoot. Before too long we were informed of their shooting schedule and we were invited to go along to collect photographic material… You can see I put a question mark on Statue Park there, wondering if it was going to make it as a level and if it was worth a visit to the film set…all of us

> were very privileged to be offered to go and see the film set…perhaps the director Martin Campbell might have preferred to have a quiet set but…it was an enormous help to making the game so closely follow the film. (Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

As an early 3D FPS in an explorable environment, the game incorporates ludic references beyond Bond as the basis for the level design aspect of world-building, as Hollis describes:

> The level designs were made to be balanced, and the architecture was built without a strict path in mind. With a non-linear feel, the player had more roaming space and options. Some rooms gave no purpose except to exist in the level, and you were able to move in any way you wanted to in order to get to your objectives. These multiple objectives were placed in the game with inspiration from Super Mario 64. (cited in Watson, 2013, n.p.)

Foregrounded in *GoldenEye 007* is the integration of Bond's weapons and gadgets. Throughout the history of the franchise, the character of Bond is closely associated with particular iconographic elements, primarily his Walther PPK, as well as the various wristwatches from Sean Connery's Rolex, through to Daniel Craig's Omega Seamaster. There exists a crossover between weapons and gadgets, operating as world-building materials whilst also being crucial to the interactivation of the film.

Interactivation

One of the most obvious avenues for interactivating a Bond film is the treatment of his plethora of gadgets, and the game privileged the integration of these Bondian signatures in an innovative way. Bond's watch is used as a hub for inventory, load out, and mission objectives. The player presses a button and Bond brings his watch into his field of vision, which then fills the screen and allows the character to access the afore-mentioned tools. Clearly indicated objectives are accessed through the watch, thus the game omits onscreen reminders as to the current goal, and further integrates the player into the Bond experience. Importantly, the game goes beyond the confines of this film to draw from the Bond heritage, as Brown & Krzywinska (2009) highlight:

> Trademarks of the franchise are reworked to serve a directly ludic purpose, so Bond's ever evolving super-watch doubles as the game's pause menu, health meter, and status screen. It also sometimes functions as a weapon, and designers incorporated abilities from several Bond movies, rather than being held back and allowing only the functionality the gadget had in *GoldenEye* (1995). (pp. 98-99)

The watch renders traditionally non-diegetic game material diegetic. As Pinchbeck (2009) describes: "devices that fall within the reality presented by the game can be described as *ludodiegetic*" (p. 8), and the treatment of Bond's watch can be seen to demonstrate this concept.[100] As Pinchbeck explains further, "one of the clearly identified factors in creating and maintaining a sense of presence is an unbroken experience" (p. 6). In other words, by integrating mission materials via Bond's wristwatch within the reality of the game world, and being able to literally fill the player's field of vision with the watch, an unbroken sense of presence is created, as well as a seamless interactivation of key Bond film iconography.

There is a relatively restricted movement within maps. This level of restriction comes from the premise of initially considering the game to follow the on-rails conventions of the arcade light-gun game *Virtua Cop* (Sega, 1994). In fact, the N64 controller hadn't been finalised yet, and the *GoldenEye* team had "no idea what the control would be like at all" (Mitchell, 2012, n.p.). At the time, it was rumoured that the control would feature an analog stick, and Hollis wondered if that would work for a shooter (Mitchell, 2012, n.p.). Regarding the actual gameplay, Hollis pictured something between Sega's *Virtua Cop* and id Software's seminal FPS *Doom* (Mitchell, 2012, n.p.). Though Hollis was drawing his inspiration from other FPS titles at the time, his aim was:

> To create "more intelligent characters" than (*Virtua Cop*). Ideally these characters would react appropriately to a given situation, doing things like sounding alarms, taking orders or even running away. Further, the game would have a greater degree of interactivity, like bullet holes being left in walls. "Pretty much all you have is the gun, and the more the gun can do, and reach out to the environment, and feed back to you that stuff has happened, the better." (Mitchell, 2012, n.p.)

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[100] This particular diegetic interface acts as precursor to the *Fallout* series' Pip-Boy wrist computer.

In light of contemporary games, where most action adventure games include various activities, there exists a kind of purity in *GoldenEye 007* where it is primarily a shooter that does not engage in "feature creep."[101] The title is focused on shooting mechanics, and therefore activities that don't fall within this purview are jettisoned, even though the source film contains significant action events that could have been interactivated using non-FPS gameplay mechanics. This purity of shooter mechanics in the game has been praised extensively by both critics and scholars. The game uses traditional tropes of the genre in its mission objectives, such as rescuing hostages and defusing bombs, as seen in "Mission 4: Monte Carlo" (the frigate sequence).

The common approach with Reflection Model adaptation is to interactivate the most suitable action sequences, and indeed in *GoldenEye 007* there is an expansion of most action events from the source film. One key exception is the absence of Bond's signature car chase in the adapted game. A potential reason for this could be linked once more to the game's aforementioned commitment to a pure approach of the FPS genre, and that car racing design elements were outside this spectrum.

A level of abstraction exists with regard to the absence of character's recorded voices, as in its place text presents the dialogue at the top of screen. Since characters don't speak, it can be seen as akin to silent film; by not providing voices for the characters, the game becomes a silent version of the *GoldenEye* film.

[101] "Feature creep" refers to the expansion of a project's scope to include additional game features during development.

Contextual Analysis

Development Account

Created by well-regarded British developer, Rare, *GoldenEye 007* was conceived during a period in the company's history when they were in a particularly successful relationship with Nintendo during the 4th console generation, best known for making the *Donkey Kong Country* (Nintendo, 1994–1996) series as well as the fighting game series *Killer Instinct* (Midway and Nintendo, 1994–1996). Lead designer of *GoldenEye 007*, Martin Hollis provides insight[102] into the origins of *GoldenEye 007*:

> The beginning of *GoldenEye* is a bit of a strange story… Rare was approached by Nintendo and asked if they would be interested in making a game for the upcoming Bond film which didn't have a title at that time only a #... at that time there are essentially two large teams at Rare… Tim Stamper decided not to make the game, Greg Males on *Donkey Kong Country* [lead designer] decided to pass. I heard about this as a rumour and I said to Tim Stamper "this sounds cool, I'd like to make this game." And he said ok. And that was pretty much my pitch. I don't really know and I can't really explain why they had trust in me after simply being head programmer on *Killer Instinct*. (Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

Bond fandom amongst the team was a significant factor in the making of *GoldenEye 007*, as Hollis explains:

> I still am a big fan of the Bond films. Back then though, there hadn't been a Bond film for years and years, and the last ones hadn't been terribly inspiring. They'd lost their Bondness. That was one of the reasons no one at Rare was bothered, but

[102] Of all case studies included in this thesis, *GoldenEye 007* is exceptional in terms of the amount of frank and in-depth development account material made public. Notably, this material is spared the usual videogame industry marketing polish often applied to sugar-coat challenging situations and relationships between developer and publisher. This information is all the more fascinating for its rarity, as well as how close the game came to not getting a release at all, as director Martin Hollis pushed back at publishers wanting to cancel the game, as he and his team missed one deadline after another. It is also pertinent to note that *GoldenEye 007* is the oldest and in many ways highest regarded game of the study, and thus there exists a higher volume of critical material released non-contemporaneously to the original game's release, which allowed for more to be revealed from the developers, and more in-depth analysis to occur. It is also relevant to consider that, of the contemporaneous accounts that were able to be accessed (as many are now offline), the commentary on technical breakthroughs is of particular significance.

> I loved Bond, so it was very exciting and it was an open brief. I could choose what kind of game to make. I wasn't experienced in the commercial world of video games, and I wasn't aware of the stigma of a film license, so I came at it with an open mind. (Jordan, 2007, n.p.)

Here, Hollis mentions that he was unaware of the notoriety associated with licensed games which, with his enthusiasm for the franchise, was linked to his eagerness for creating a Bond game.

Planning began in 1995, and the mission outline presented below (Figure 11) was the first ever presented from designer Martin Hollis to Rare. Although the final version is somewhat different, Hollis notes that about two thirds remained as initially conceptualised.

Missions

1 Severnaya — Part One
2 Dam, Arkhangelsk
3 Chemical Warfare Facility #2, Arkhangelsk
4 Manticore, Monte Carlo
5 French Destroyer, Monte Carlo
6 Severnaya — Part Two
7 Statue Park, St. Petersburg
8 Russian Intelligence Building, St. Petersburg
9 Trevelyan's Train, St. Petersburg
10 Jungle, Arecibo
11 Transmitter Perimeter Buildings, Arecibo
12 Transmitter dish, Arecibo
13 Control Centre, Arecibo
14 Transmitter Catwalk, Arecibo
15 Trevelyan, Arecibo

Figure 11. Hollis's initial mission structure proposed to Rare (Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

Hollis reveals some of the first notes he ever scribbled about the adaptation process:

> I was wondering to myself two very important questions for this game, what's the appropriate level of humour, and what's the appropriate level of violence. This is a list of questions, mainly… can we get footage, can we use the actual music, can we use the title sequence, can we use the licenses, can we use material from other Bond films, can we get photos of props costumes etc… I made this clear to Nintendo and they were good enough to send back an extremely detailed

document explaining everything we could use, which was an astonishing amount, we were very lucky to have such a broad license. (Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

questions important to bond game

Martin Hollis 3/2/94

What is the appropriate level of Humour?
What is the appropriate level of Violence?
Can we get footage as soon as it is shot?
Can we use actual music? Music from which films?
Can we use title sequence and music?
Can we use likeness of good and bad guys and gals?
Can we use likenesses/material/episodes from other Bond films?
Photos of props
Photos of costumes
007/006 pretitle
007 various
natalya various
ourumov (uniform)
xenia various
boris various
Guards
Goons
military police
Kgb goons
ship hands
technicians
scientists

Figure 12. Hollis's questions for Nintendo to pass to the license holders (Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

Being granted access to the Bond film set was a rare precedent for movie-licensed game developers at this time, providing valuable insights but also heightening the significance of the project according to an article in which four of the development team are iterviewed:

> Visiting the filmset [*sic*] undoubtedly helped cement the game world in the minds of the team, but it also reminded Rare that the clock was ticking. While trying to release the game in tandem with the film had never been considered a viable proposition, the thought of it not appearing until the next Bond movie hit cinemas instilled an understandable sense of urgency. ("The Making of Goldeneye," 2011, n.p.)

The developers were also faced with the challenge of making a game for a console that did not yet exist, which presented complex technical problems as the game developers worked to create a game for hypothetical hardware with projected technical specifications as Hollis explains:

> looking back, I imagine there were lots of very serious, ongoing discussions about cancelling the project. For example, most of the team were new hires without any experience of game development. The original idea was there would be a glittering launch simultaneously with Project Reality (what became called the N64), which would be synchronised with the release of the *GoldenEye* movie. (Jordan, 2007, n.p.)

Hollis recounts his initial gameplay vision directing *GoldenEye 007* as a cross between Sega's *Virtua Cop* (1994) and id Software's seminal first-person shooter *Doom*: "I'd also been playing a lot of *Time Crisis*… and I could see the value of having a gun in your hand, but there was no gun planned for the N64" [103] (Mitchell, 2012, n.p.). Nevertheless, he stuck to his vision of making a first-person shooter: "The first decision was 'Let's make a shooting game,' then I was asked to do the design doc and build the team" (Jordan, 2007, n.p.).

The project started out on a small scale as Hollis describes: "I started out with Mark Edmonds and Karl Hilton, and it was the three of us for about year. We started out small and grew very slowly. By the end of the third year, we were about a dozen" (cited in Jordan, 2007, n.p.). Atypical to the usual licensing arrangement was the sense of Hollis and his team being left to their own devices, and this level of trust from both Rare and Nintendo can be seen as linked to Hollis's hit-making reputation from his earlier successes:

> We were pretty much left alone. Rare was never a talkative company… The essential process was throwing some talented people together and letting them get on with it. We didn't have project managers, there was a smidgen of a schedule, but it wasn't as if we were told to deliver milestones. Of course, *GoldenEye* was awfully, tragically, disastrously late. (Jordan, 2007, n.p.)

This lack of publisher supervision may have been a double-edged sword: whilst it allowed the development team to continue working on what turned out to be a game that would become synonymous with the console, *GoldenEye 007* was only released in

[103] Here Hollis is referring to a light gun peripheral, used to shoot targets on a CRT monitor. Light guns were common interfaces in both arcade environments and on earlier home consoles.

August 1997 which was 22 months after *GoldenEye*'s cinema premiere and 9 months after the launch of the N64 console. Programmer Steve Ellis comments on the surprising lack of involvement from the publisher in terms of the deadline:

> I have to admit that I don't remember any talk of deadlines or schedules, which is completely astounding. And I assume as lead on the project I was told what the deadline was—probably several times. But I was so focused on what could be done to make the game better, that today, this isn't in my mind at all. (cited in Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

This trust-based relationship between developer and publisher can be seen to have allowed the confidence in the team to move ahead without approval to install what is considered the most innovative feature of the game: the groundbreaking multiplayer mode which was only added in the final stages of the game, as Steve Ellis details:

> One of the things that always strikes me as crazy is that until sometime like March or April of 1997, there wasn't a multiplayer mode at all. It hadn't even been started. It really was put in at the last minute—something you wouldn't dream of doing these days—and it was done without the knowledge or permission of the management at Rare and Nintendo. The first they knew about it was when we showed it to them working. However—since the game was already late by that time, if we hadn't done it that way, it probably never would have happened. (cited in Hollis, 2012, n.p.)

Although the focus of this case study is concerned with issues of adaptation, it was the console's multiplayer FPS mode that wound up being the key feature of the game which elevated it to such high regard in the eyes of both players and the industry. This account demonstrates that it was unforeseen for *GoldenEye 007* to achieve its longevity and iconic status. Presaging the success of console first-person shooters such as Microsoft's *Halo* (2001), *GoldenEye 007* stood alongside a handful of games (including such masterpieces as *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*) that came to define the Nintendo 64 console.

Critical and Player Reception

Key points relating to textual factors featured in *Goldeneye 007*'s reception are excerpted from critics' (underlined) and players' (non-underlined) reviews and comments and are presented in Table 7.

GoldenEye 007's MobyRank of 93 and Metacritic score of 96 are by a significant margin the highest of any movie-licensed game.

Game as Adaptation

"*GoldenEye* closely mirrors the plot of the 17th James Bond movie, starting with the daring bungee jump sequence and ending with a showdown between 007 and Alec Trevelyan atop a huge antenna. In between, you'll shoot scads of soldiers, plant explosives, escape from a train seconds before it explodes, and execute other decidedly Bond-like maneuvers." (Gertsmann, 1997, n.p.)

"*Goldeneye*…is essentially a gimmick-free game. There are many scenes in the film that game developers could have felt compelled to use…Instead, Rare focused entirely on features that fit the first-person perspective of the game perfectly: Rigorous action, suspense-packed stealth sequences and the occasional wristwatch gadget." (Lumpi, 2009, n.p.)

"This game turned me on to James Bond. I used to like the movies and had seen a few of them, but this game completely immersed the player in the world of 007—it was utterly convincing in making you actually feel like you were James Bond. After experiencing what it was like to be James Bond, I fell in love with the movies and went nuts on all things Bond…the whole experience has great production values, from the wrist watch menu's, Q gadgets, and dossiers you could tell this was a game crafted with loving care from the minute you loaded it. Obviously created by huge

Bond fans for Bond fans." (Bull, 2003, n.p.)

"…The levels are amazing—20 huge muthas, actually developed from blue prints from the movie sets. When I saw the movie after playing *Goldeneye*, I was astounded because the movie locations looked exactly the same as the game." (Bull, 2003, n.p.)

Storytelling

"*GoldenEye*'s (missions) follow the plot of the film closely, with a certain amount of artistic licence employed in certain sections to ensure that this first-person shoot 'em up contains even more action than its filmic counterpart." (*GoldenEye Review*, 1997, n.p.)

Mood and Atmosphere

"What stands out most about *GoldenEye* is the depth of its atmosphere. The realistic setting, remarkably well-animated characters and interactive backgrounds combine to create a genuine sense of 'being there' which is rarely experienced in a videogame." (*GoldenEye Review*, 1997, n.p.)

Game Mechanics

"(*GoldenEye* 007) is the holder of the title Most Important Console First-Person Shooter. Before (*GoldenEye 007*)...many would struggle with even the idea of such a thing…Culling gadgets and characters from the entire Bond universe, (*GoldeEye 007*) pounced on every opportunity its license could afford." (Mott, 2010, p. 334)

Wii Re-release

"For 13 years (*GOLDENEYE 007*)'s been the critic's go-to reference point for Bond games and movie tie-ins. Endless review introductions have pondered: 'Will *this* be the game to match (*GoldenEye 007*)'s triumphs?' before meandering to their inevitable conclusion that, while a valiant effort has been made, the answer is still no. Double-oh-seven out of ten." (Parkin, 2010, n.p.)

"Rare's seminal Nintendo 64 first-person shooter popularised a console genre that has grown to become gaming's most prevalent and profitable. At a time when movie tie-ins were inevitably uninspired cash-ins, rushed through development in order to match their cinematic counterpart's release date, Rare's game arrived in its own time, long after the movie was out, treating the IP with unprecedented care. Those features that weren't raw innovations were at the very least game-changing improvements on what had gone before. Developed by a company at the height of its expertise and creativity, the shockwaves of the original (*GoldenEye 007*)'s influence forever altered the FPS landscape." (Parkin, 2010, n.p.)

Genre "(*GoldenEye 007*) is a real oddity. Licensed games are rarely good…First-person shooter was one genre that seemed to be incompatible with console controllers. And yet, thanks to the creative talent of the guys from Rare, the unthinkable has happened. (*GoldenEye 007*) is not just a good licensed game or a good FPS…It is, in fact, one of the best first-person shooters regardless of the platform, and a very important milestone in the development of that genre... I don't like James Bond movies. I don't like playing first-person shooters on consoles. But (*GoldenEye 007*) transcends its license and its choice of platform, delivering an expertly design, tightly paced, superb FPS experience. Regardless of times and systems, this is required playing for every fan of the genre that fully deserves its status as an influential classic." (Cor 13, 2013, n.p.) "This game did to the genre what its movie counterpart did to the James Bond franchise, it brought it back to the forefront with style and pizazz that many others besides games like *Halo* can compete with, indeed this game should actually belong up in the ranks of games like *Halo* if not above it on the list." (Big John WV, 2009, n.p.)
Critical Praise "*GoldenEye* not only lives up to the 'quality, not quantity' mantra that Nintendo continues to tout, it surpasses it." (Gertsmann, 1997, n.p.) "*Goldeneye* proved that both console FPSs and movie-licensed titles cannot only be good, but excellent games…For me, this game is one of the, if not the best reason to own a Nintendo 64. Rare's masterpiece from the company's golden ages." (Lumpi, 2009, n.p.)

Table 7. GoldenEye 007 Critical and Player Reception

A number of critics and players praise the game for its ability to capture the feel of the Bond series. Significantly, its reflective approach to the film adaptation was not considered as a negative attribute compared with many other movie-licensed games that employ this model, with the alterations to the film's plot seen as advantageous to the gameplay experience. Commentators cite the design choices such as the wristwatch interface as incorporating aspects of the film into the game in such a way as not to appear obvious or forced but organically integrated into the form of the game. Numerous comments mentioned the immersive nature of the game that led to identification with the Bond character. The game acts as a rare example of a licensed title that prompted gamers to further investigate the Bond franchise due to the quality and interest in the game experience itself. Observers mentioned even though they may not appreciate the Bond franchise, the FPS design features of the game—particularly the level design and shooting and movement mechanics—marked the game as one of, if not the best console shooter they had ever played. In addition to responses to the 1997 release, comments surrounding the Nintendo Wii release in 2010 were included due to commentators comparing it to the N64 version. These reviews invariably contained an overwhelmingly positive and nostalgic tone in reference to the original release.[104]

Paratextual Analysis

Adaptation System

GoldenEye 007 is identified as category A1 in the Adaptation System. Although the source film *GoldenEye* is an original work, it is based within an established fictional

[104] Important to note is the volume of both critics' and players' comments that foregrounded the multiplayer aspect of the game, with an overwhelming number of gamers singling out this experience as the core strength of the game. This observation is congruent with the highly regarded reputation of the game's multiplayer component. However, the scope of this study only deals with single player games, or the single player campaign of a game containing multiplayer modes, thus no comments regarding this aspect were included in the summary table above.

universe which includes a series of novels and film adaptations in addition to several pre-existing videogames based on the property.[105]

GoldenEye is part of a film series but not strictly a sequel, as the Bond series employs a kind of "loose continuity" with the expectation that audiences are familiar with the traditional Bond codes and conventions. What has happened between films can either connect the stories, or, as Bond actors change, completely reset the narrative. Thus, an argument may be made that *GoldenEye* is not strictly a sequel to previous Bond film entries even though it is part of an ongoing series.

Events, characters, and structure of *GoldenEye 007* follows the film, but the game also paratextually adapts typical Bond elements outside of the source film which find their way into the finished game such that in multiplayer mode, iconic villains from other Bond films such as Jaws and Oddjob are playable characters.

Not only does *GoldenEye 007* adapt the events, characters and overall structure of the source film, it synthesises what are considered typical Bond elements drawn from previous films in the franchise.

GoldenEye was the second and final Bond film to be novelised by writer John Gardner. The book closely follows the film's storyline, but Gardner added a sequence prior to the opening bungee jump in which Bond kills a group of Russian guards, a change that the videogame retained. This exemplifies the kind of transmedial inflection where a subsequent adaptation may draw on multiple existing versions of a text.

[105] Unlike a majority of the Bond films produced up to that point, *GoldenEye* was not based on a Bond novel by Ian Fleming but was based on an original screenplay, with the film's title taken from the name of Fleming's Jamaican estate.

Transmedia State

The relationship of James Bond videogames to the Bond franchise has been a varied one with remakes and remasters of *GoldenEye 007* appearing almost 15 years after the original release.

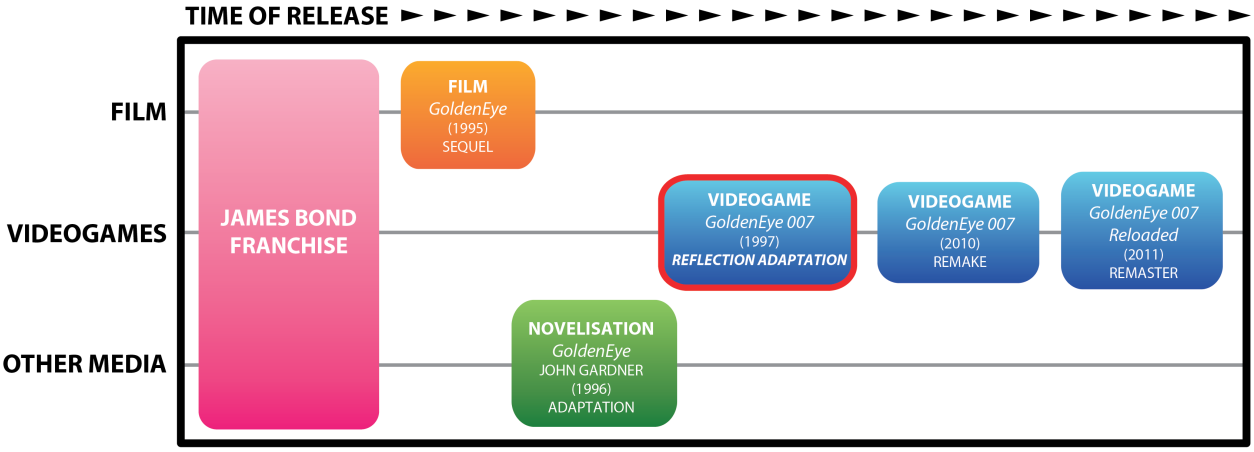

Figure 13. GoldenEye 007 Transmedia State

Many Bond games were produced after *GoldenEye 007*, taking diverse approaches to interactivation of the property. Some were simultaneous adaptations of film releases, and some were non-simultaneous retrospective adaptations, such as the well-received *From Russia With Love* (2005). However, no Bond game since *GoldenEye 007* has been as highly regarded, despite many developers having tried to follow suit. Due to the critical and cultural position of *GoldenEye 007*, the game was remade as *GoldenEye 007* (2010) for the Wii, and *GoldenEye 007 Reloaded* (2011) substituting character models such as the contemporaneous James Bond (Daniel Craig) and other supporting cast members. As the critical / player analysis demonstrated, it is clear that *GoldenEye 007* fans share an unusual level of devotion to the original which has been revealed by examples of fan performance.[106]

[106] Such is the popularity of the N64 version of the game a live-action parody of a Let's Play of *GoldenEye 007* was made by fan filmmakers (Dark Pixel, 2012).

Case Study: *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* (LucasArts, 2006)

Reflection Adaptation of the *Star Wars* Original Trilogy (1977-1983)

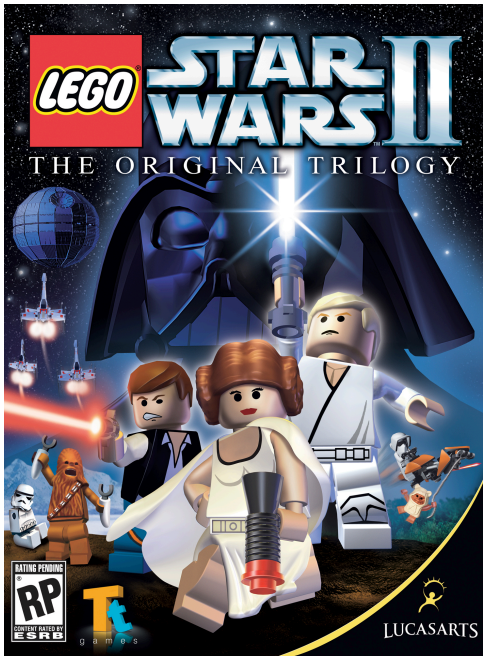

Figure 14. Box Cover Art for *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy*

Textual Synopsis

The *Star Wars* Original Trilogy (1977–1983) is an epic space opera set "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away…" telling the classic hero's journey of Luke Skywalker as he does battle with the evil Galactic Empire, comes to recognise his special connection with a mystical spiritual force, becomes a Jedi, and ultimately confronts his dark father, the Sith Lord, Darth Vader.

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (2006) is a third person action-puzzle game retelling key events from the Original Trilogy films represented in digital LEGO.

Introduction

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (hereafter *LSWII*) contains three major parts. Each part represents the narrative of a complete film in the *Star Wars* Original Trilogy: *A New Hope* (Lucas, 1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (Kirshner, 1980), and *Return of the Jedi* (Marquand, 1983). All three games were examined and it was found that the structures and strategies of each of the games were very similar, leading to the conclusion that only one of the major parts of the game needed to be critically analysed for the purposes of this study to avoid an exercise in redundancy. *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game* is a Reflection adaptation of the *Star Wars* Prequel Trilogy (Lucas, 1999–2005) which was released the previous year (2005). The later release chosen for this case study is critically viewed as a superior work, and therefore deemed more relevant to the research.[107]

As the LEGO videogame versions of the Prequel Trilogy were released prior to the Original Trilogy, this creates an interesting reception relationship between them. As most audiences are aware, the Original Trilogy of *Star Wars* predated the Prequel Trilogy by almost twenty years (*The Phantom Menace* [Lucas, 1997], *Attack of the Clones* [Lucas, 2002], *Revenge of the Sith* [Lucas, 2005]). Robert Buerkle (2014) describes the transgenerational appeal of the *Star Wars* LEGO videogame franchise from the perspective of those players who were fans of the Original Trilogy as children and the transferal of nostalgia to younger generations of players.

The *Star Wars* franchise is not alone when it comes to LEGO videogames. At the time of this study, Traveller's Tales have produced 29 LEGO videogame versions of well-known licenses, including *Harry Potter, The Lord of the Rings,* and *Batman*. In 2014, *The LEGO Movie* was released in cinemas and things came full circle with the simultaneous videogame adaptation, aptly titled: *The LEGO Movie: The Video Game* (2014). It should be noted that prior to the release of these videogames, LEGO acquired

[107] Subsequent to the initial release of *LSWII* in 2006, LucasArts released a combination of both the Original Trilogy and the Prequel Trilogy entitled *LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga* in 2007. *LSWII* exists on multiple platforms—the version of the game chosen for this case study was the PlayStation 3 release as part of *The Complete Saga*.

the licenses of these properties and subsequently produced LEGO playsets based on these licenses.

Notable sources that deal with the *LEGO Star Wars* games include Newman and Simons's (2011) investigation of the operation of transmediality and play, while the cultural significance of LEGO is essayed in *LEGO Studies: Examining the Building Blocks of a Transmedial Phenomenon* (2014) edited by game scholar Mark JP Wolf. In this edited collection, Jessica Aldred offers the most sustained investigation into the LEGO videogames and their transmedial characteristics, while Robert Burkle argues for the transgenerational appeal of the LEGO videogame franchise with a particular focus on *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*.[108]

Textual Analysis

Narrative Form

Major story events and the introduction of story spaces are reflected in hypotext plot sequences in *LSWII* albeit using strategies of compression and expansion among others. Gameplay sequences are comprised of either elongations of moments from the film, or the use of locations as play spaces, such as the Jundland Wastes from Chapter 2 of the game. The game follows the events of the film's narrative with no resequencing taking place of any kind. The game structure is highly regimented in that it follows a cut-scene – gameplay – cut-scene rhythm. The game is broken into six chapters. At the beginning of each chapter, an opening credit crawl identifies each chapter in the game, identical to the style seen in the *Star Wars* films. These title crawls act as a type of classical redundancy tool in that they both setup the action to come, and restate the events of the previous chapter in the way a "Previously on" tease operates in a television serial context (Mittel, 2015). Each cut-scene is a compression of plot events of the source film, re-enacting those same events with a comical tone.

[108] Also of relevance to this case study, is Wolf's own analysis of the remediation of the Death Star into its LEGO playset counterpart. See Wolf (2014a).

Figure 15. Tail cut-scene for Chapter 3: "Mos Eisley Spaceport"

The main adaptation strategies used in the game are addition and omission.[109] Addition is most markedly represented in the shift in tonal humour, while omission is put into practice by eliding the darker aspects of the films. As such, the uncle Owen & aunt Beru subplot is omitted, ultimately due to the act of their murder by Stormtroopers (albeit offscreen). Reflection Model games typically use the strategy of expansion far more than that of compression, and *LSWII* is no exception as gameplay levels expand the space and duration of sequences that may only last a short number of minutes of screen duration in the source films.

Newman and Simons (2007) argue that in addition to being an adaptation of the films, the game draws on a playful remixing strategy that *Star Wars* toy merchandise has fostered since the appearance of the first action figures in 1978, albeit within the confines of the "carefully policed boundaries" (p. 240) of Traveller's Tales' game design. The game strikes an overall comedic tone,[110] one that subsequently permeated all of the LEGO movie-licensed games, continuing into the film spin-off, *The LEGO Movie*. This tone may be considered a form of comedic parody. Parody, an emotional tone associated with irony and satire, is defined by Harries (2000) as:

[109] A complete list of the alterations made by the game can be found on the Wookieepedia entry on *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* (n.d.).
[110] This is markedly different to the high melodramatic tone of the source films.

> The process of recontextualizing a target or source text through the transformation of its textual (and contextual) elements, thus creating a new text. The conversion—through the resulting oscillation between similarity to and difference from the target—creates a level of ironic incongruity with an inevitable satiric impulse. (p. 6)

While parody is considered by Harries (2000) to be synonymous with spoof and lampoon (p. 5), here it operates by virtue of the belovedness of the source material, in addition to its now vintage quality. The game draws from not only the source films but also a fan's love of the franchise. As stated, even though the game presents the events of the Original Trilogy in a parodic mode, it still captures the spirit of these films. Lucas's tone is one of high earnestness, and to borrow a term from *A New Hope,* a kind of "hokey" melodrama.[111] The game represents a fan's view of the films which have been watched and re-watched many times over, to the point where the intended dramatic artifice is deconstructed. In other words, if you scratch the surface of the "ham and cheese" of *Star Wars* you are not too far from the satirical presentation of LEGO *Star Wars*. As Aldred (2014) argues, "LEGO game cut-scenes may pay loving homage to the famous film scenes they're based on, but they also feature performances that openly mock their obligations to the cinematic blockbuster, as well as the realist character aspirations of most other movie-licensed games" (p. 114). Similarly, Aldred also believes that LEGO characters create the impression that they are outside the rules that bind games too closely to cinema (p. 115) and are therefore able to avoid the dreaded film-to-game bad adaptation outcome.

World-building

Characters are modelled on the commensurate film counterparts and are clearly identified by their costume. Further identification can be understood when associated behavioural gestures are represented in the cut-sequences of the game. As the characters from the film are represented as animated LEGO, a certain level of abstraction exists. This aesthetic feature is discussed by Aldred (2014) in her essay on digital abstraction as franchise strategy:

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[111] This is not surprising since a key reference for Lucas were the *Flash Gordon* serials of the 1930s, among many others (Brooker, 2004, 2009b).

> LEGO videogames mobilise what Donald Krafton calls a "figurative mode" of cartoon performance, characterised by its extroverted style, formulaic character types, and recurrent gestures, sayings, and gags. In doing so, LEGO avatars serve as recognisable and appealing transmedial characters at the same time as they parody the convergence imperatives that necessitate this service. (p. 114)

The LEGO abstraction of the *Star Wars* characters relegates their valuable franchise IP to a lesser role in an effort to prioritise game design and gameplay decision-making. The game transforms these well-established characters into "winsome, if somewhat mocking representations of their cinematic selves" (Aldred, 2014, p.106) in accordance with the tonal shift at the heart of this game's adaptation strategy. One major aesthetic difference in terms of sound, is that the game contains no dialogue except for the sound effects of R2D2 and other droids. As with the film, one can infer meanings and basic intentions from the non-linguistic cues displayed in the sounds of droids and aliens, such as Chewbacca's growls and R2D2's whistles.

Interactivation

The game allows the player to switch between two characters in any particular sequence within a chapter. By virtue of design elements such as game aesthetics, *LSWII* abstracts direct reflection elements of the source films thereby distancing it from the source films. The game however, is an aesthetic reflection of the *Star Wars* LEGO playsets with the central interactivation strategies—referred to as "crashing" and "building"—obviously drawing not from the film hypotext, but from the act of LEGO play. This crashing mechanic can be seen to be the game's main mechanic. Players explore *Star Wars* environments, breaking down environmental elements using weapons such as blasters and lightsabers, or in some cases, with LEGO pieces they have collected to build other structures (see Figure 16). Players crash (deconstruct), collect, and reassemble pieces in the course of gameplay. This process of crashing is the game's core mechanic which creates a kind of obsessive compulsive enjoyment.

Figure 16. Jundland Wastes gameplay

When the gameplay sequences take place, a kind of temporal expansion of the film unfolds, the action and tone of these sequences analogous to the action sequences in the source film, bolstered by the use of John Williams's score. Conversely, the actual process of breaking apart, collecting and building, has no relationship to the source film in any way, and in these recurrent moments the game becomes more about a remediated version of playing with LEGO playsets, which suspends the level of engagement with *Star Wars* itself.

In terms of game genre, *LSWII* is considered to be a third person action game. More specifically, the generic conditions of the game are shared with TT Games's other LEGO adaptations, and it can therefore be considered part of a subgenre created by TT Games (Brookey & Booth, 2006; Wallin, 2007; Aldred, 2014).

Contextual / Reception Analysis

Development Account

The paradigm of iterative design is key to understanding the making of *LSWII* by British developer Traveller's Tales (the development subsidiary of TT Games since 2004), publisher LucasArts, and The LEGO Group themselves. The concept of iterative design is a standard paradigm within the videogame industry, with sequels to AAA

games sometimes greenlit whilst the initial game is still in development, and well before it is due to be released. Certain franchises are often conceptualised with prearranged updates in an effort to offer annual improvements to each year's installment. This allows developers the possibility of both refining and innovating concepts and technology they have established in a previous entry in a series.

Very little has been published on the development of *LSWII,* however there are accounts of the initial proposals and meetings that led to the making of the first game, *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*. This is highly significant to the case study, since initial games in a franchise establish the style and tone which is then iterated with consequent releases. Thus, it is useful to visit the titles released in the lead up to *LSWII* in order to gain insight to the developer's ambition.

As with many small to medium development studios, Traveller's Tales were producing licensed games as their mainstay output; they have a long history with licensed games going back to the Sega Mega Drive in the 1990s. Most significantly, they made an ambitious original IP game title *Haven: Call of the King* (Midway Games, 2002) which combined different genres and was eventually recognised to be incredibly innovative, even though it didn't gain recognition at the time. As lead designer, co-founder, and director at TT games, Jon Burton, explains, he wanted to create "a space adventure with the same sense of scale [as the Mercenary series], allowing you to explore ground-level dungeons all the way up to orbiting spaceships" ("Lego, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*: Traveller's Tales Studio Profile," 2011, n.p.).

This game drew the attention of LEGO, who approached TT Games about their idea for a *Star Wars* adaptation. LEGO had been making LEGO *Star Wars* playsets for six years prior to the development of the first game, and were already convinced of the market value of the proposal. LEGO had significant involvement in the process, as they made the initial pitch to LucasArts to make a LEGO videogame adaptation and come onboard as publisher. But ultimately the demo of *Haven* was what garnered interest in TT Games as developer as Jon Burton recalls: "I had sent a demo of *Haven* to the head of LucasArts, saying, 'Imagine this with Star Wars attached,' but he left... I was desperate to make a *Star Wars* game, so we made the demo, and it worked." ("Lego, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*: Traveller's Tales Studio Profile," 2011, n.p.).

Unlike many developers, Jon Burton had a genuine affinity with licensed games as a *NowGamer.com* Traveller's Tales studio profile indicates:

> Jon realised that his talent lay in the field of licensed products. With a huge amount of creative direction over the project, *Mickey Mania* was the first game he sat down and designed on paper before designing the systems around it. "I've never seen myself given a blank sheet of paper; that's too daunting in a lot of ways. I've always liked a challenge within some guidelines. I think that's where licences and things really suited us well: here's a set of parameters; now go and excel in that direction." ("Lego, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*: Traveller's Tales Studio Profile," 2011, n.p.)

As Smith (2008) indicates, according to the development team, the intention of the game was to reinvent the *Star Wars* franchise for a younger audience through a LEGO aesthetic:

> It seemed like such a simple, kid-friendly idea: Tell the *Star Wars* story through the blocky filter of LEGO characters. The cute look of its *Star Wars* toys had contributed to fantastic sales at retail; presumably, its design application to a third person action-adventure game featuring the Prequel Trilogy would appeal to the younger *Star Wars* audience. (p. 192)

Along with the aim to appeal to a younger audience, was a very conscious decision for the game not to be tonally consistent with *Star Wars*, but rather to take a parodic approach. Cork (2013) notes that this was an ambitious reimagining of a property that, until its development, had taken a strict approach with iron clad guidelines to the aesthetic and tone of the franchise:

> The first game was not only notable for kicking off what would be a long partnership with the LEGO Group, but for its ambitious approach to the license. Lucasfilm let TT Games tackle three films in one game; it allowed the studio to release a game chock-full of *Episode III* spoilers two months before it hit theaters. (n.p.)

The result was a new level of audience enjoyment garnered from viewing the very familiar source material with a tonally different approach. Also established in the first game, was the two-player mode designed for parent and child interaction as noted by TT Games's head of production Jonathan Smith: "Not only did we bring the co-op experience to that game, but also the free-play concept, framework, and design" (Cork, 2013, n.p.). Cork adds that Smith felt it "was critical from the outset that players were given the chance to experiment and fool around without being penalized" (Cork, 2013, n.p.).

These formats were built upon in the second LEGO *Star Wars* game, which is considered of higher intrinsic quality due to the deep familiarity with the source material and the process of iterative design. As Smith elaborates:

> We were really on secure ground with the classic trilogy movies that everyone on the team knew intimately... We had such affection for it, and that comes across in the storytelling scenes and the character animations as well. We had iconic scenes to play with on the level design. I think we also started to get a sense of how far we could push the dramatic experience in a Lego game. (cited in Cork, 2013, n.p.)

Smith identifies the team's innovation in terms of scale and advanced play mechanics, going from the creation of the first LEGO *Star Wars* game, to the second, and then to other LEGO game adaptations: "You can trace a lineage from there through other big characters, big bosses, right up to some of the just incredible, overwhelming spectacle that there is in Lego *Lord of the Rings*" (cited in Cork, 2013, n.p.).

Critical and Player Reception

Key points relating to textual factors featured in *LSWII*'s reception are excerpted from critics' (underlined) and players' (non-underlined) reviews and comments and are presented in Table 8.

LSWII's holds a MobyRank of 80 (Xbox 360) / 82 (PS2) and a Metacritic of 81 (Xbox 360) / 84 (PS2).

Game as Adaptation

"Hey, it's *Star Wars*, done with LEGO. It covers all the episodes, cutting out the duller moments for the high action worthy of a Jedi, but still pays homage to some of the more intense dramatic scenes with brilliant little pantomimes. Its gentle parody steeped in the series canon. Maligned mythos has never been so much fun." (*Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga Review*, n.d., n.p.)

"…visuals have a ton of charm. Getting to see recognizable LEGO pieces mingling with recognizable *Star Wars* characters and locales is just really endearing." (Davis, 2006, n.p.)

"The *Star Wars* universe has been translated with such detail using LEGOs that players rarely tire of the game's diverse, plastic environment…*Star Wars* purists may also note that some of the story details have been altered to provide a better gameplay experience. For example, Emperor Palpatine DOES use a lightsaber during the final level unlike the *Return of the Jedi* film in which he simply uses a force lightning attack." (Thompson, 2006, n.p.)

"LEGO *Star Wars* II continues what made the first game so appealing, but just adds on to it. The first game made its mark by adding scenes that you wanted to play, but never could in other games, and just the fact that it made the Prequel Trilogy actually interesting to explore…Some of the key scenes and battles genuinely are exciting, especially to see how they will be handled in humorous toy form." (Chapman, 2006,

n.p.)

Mood and Atmosphere

"This entire game is held up by the comedy that it delivers, and as a result, I don't think I've laughed this hard in years." (Hilliard, 2014, n.p.)

"One cannot deny the charm and wittiness of the LEGO *Star Wars* universe. Even for adults, LEGO *Star Wars* is guaranteed a chuckle for those big fans of *Star Wars*. Every story part and even the characters themselves have a warming and charming part about them. The humorous storyline entices you until the very end, and leaves you with a satisfied feeling inside you." (Neuteboom, 2006, n.p.)

Game Mechanics / Design

"Long-time *Star Wars* fans will chuckle at the humor and reference while kids can play with siblings or other family members using the drop-in / drop-out co-op system seen in the first LEGO *Star Wars* video game…The *Star Wars* universe has been translated with such detail using LEGOs that players rarely tire of the game's diverse, plastic environment." (Thompson, 2006, n.p.)

Sound / Voice acting

"The blocky little Sith, Droids, Bounty Hunters, scoundrels and moisture farmers all thankfully have their vocal cords removed allowing for wonderful riffs and sight gags... The non-voice acting, non-text storytelling deserves a Millennium Falcon cargo of smuggled kudos, and the sound effects sound appropriately ripped straight from the source." (*Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga Review*, n.d., n.p.)

"A vast library of recognizable sound effects and that unshakably rousing John

Williams score make the experience feel that much more authentic." (Davis, 2006, n.p.) "And what is better is that [the game] can do it all without dialogue. They can convey an entire movie through its light-hearted and somewhat exaggerated humor." (Neuteboom, 2006, n.p.)
Critical Praise "Its parody-like yet innocent humor is probably the highlight of this game." (Neuteboom, 2006, n.p.) / "LEGO *Star Wars* was an example of a game that takes a franchise and injects it with its own charm and uniqueness." (Neuteboom, 2006, n.p.)
Transmedia "After finishing the game, the first thing that I wanted to do was run out and purchase every *Star Wars* LEGO set that I could find. It's good to be a kid again." (Hilliard, 2014, n.p.)
Fan Reaction "LEGO *Star Wars* II is an even better package than the original, due almost entirely to the fact that the emotional connection to *A New Hope*, *Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi* is much stronger for most people." (Davis, 2006, n.p.)

Table 8. LSWII Critical & Player Reception

In this particular case study, it was determined that there is a marked consistency between critical and gamer reception of the work—"fun," "humorous," "light-hearted," and "charming" are descriptors echoed across the data collected. A notable feel from

these comments is the abundance of enjoyment and enthusiasm for this game, regardless of age; a repeated observation is the rare potential for enjoyment here from both adults and children. This enjoyment factor is linked to the merging of franchises, particularly to the shift in tone achieved by blending LEGO and *Star Wars*. Certain commentators make mention of the pleasure in anticipating how particular scenes from the source films would be adapted with a starkly different tone.

LSWII is unique amongst the case study games because of the particular approach to film-to-game adaptation accomplished by recreating the source films in the LEGO aesthetic. Comedy has proven to be one of the most challenging emotional registers to incorporate in videogames, and so it is fitting that multiple reviewers comment on the effective humour of the game, which contributes to the notion of enjoyment of a beloved property.

Paratextual Analysis

Adaptation System

LSWII is identified as category A1 in the Adaptation System. Even though the *LSWII* game was published several years after the original films, the first LEGO *Star Wars* game preceded the release of *Revenge of the Sith* by two months, and significantly, this was in turn preceded by several years of LEGO *Star War*s-themed toys available in the marketplace. The LEGO *Star Wars* playsets, which predated the release of the videogames, may be considered important paratexts in the adaptation matrix in this case. Gray (2010) discusses the position of *Star Wars* action figures in children's play worlds and how they extend the experience of the property. Buerkle (2014) articulates how these playsets are a powerful medium for fan nostalgia. Consequently, the LEGO playsets must be considered a key hypotextual source for the subsequent videogame adaptations. Here we see a double adaptation—an adaptation of the *Star Wars* films, and simultaneously an adaptation of the LEGO playsets. With the release of *The LEGO Movie* we see a full circle journey from movie to playset, then from movie to playset to game, then from playset back to movie again.

The release of *LSWII* in 2006 followed the release of TT Games's adaptation of the *Star Wars* Prequel Trilogy (*LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*) allowing the LEGO game adaptations to be released in fictional chronological story order. This meant that the development of the Original Trilogy adaptations took place in light of the previous story elements (prequel and interquels), something not possible for the film releases due to later stories in the saga (Episodes IV-VI) appearing prior to prequel stories.

The concept of "retconning" or, retroactively altering the continuity of a series, is a well-used technique in various media. Wolf (2012b) defines the concept thus:

> As a world grows over time, so does an author's conception of it. The author's creative abilities, and the tools used during world-building may both mature and develop, making earlier works appear outdated or less sophisticated, causing an author to rethink and redesign his or her world. (pp. 212–213)

The LEGO Original Trilogy adaptation avoids adding any story elements that call forth plot points or moments from the Prequel Trilogy, thus giving up the opportunity to retcon the main story mission of the LEGO videogame version of the Original Trilogy. The game does allow players to play characters from the Prequel Trilogy after unlocking various challenges, however, the ability to play characters from previous entries in the saga does not afford narrative effects in the game.

The *Star Wars Special Editions* (1997) employed retconning—most famously altering the shootout in the Mos Eisley cantina to make it appear that Greedo first shoots Han followed by Han's shot, rather than Han shooting first. Further retconning of the saga films continued in the home video releases of the Original Trilogy films. For example, in the 2004 DVD edition of *Return of the Jedi*, Anakin Skywalker's ghost, who was originally played by the actor portraying him after the reveal of his face under Darth Vader's mask (Sebastian Shaw), was replaced by *Revenge of the Sith*-era Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen). At the end of the LEGO adaptation of *The Return of the Jedi*, A LEGO ghost version of Christensen's Anakin appears in the flames of Darth Vader's funeral pyre (prefiguring Christensen's appearance as Anakin's ghost), along with Obi-Wan, and Yoda at the Ewok village celebration. Similarly, a joke is made of the Christensen substitution for Anakin in *LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens*

(2016). As his father lies mortally wounded, Luke removes Darth Vader's helmet revealing the head of Christensen's Anakin. Luke shakes Vader's helmet and an old, scarred Anakin head drops out, which Luke promptly uses to replace the Christensen likeness.

Transmedia State

The *Star Wars* license is one of the most complex and multivalent entertainment properties in existence. For many years, the systematic approach to the permissible usage of this license was applied in an ad-hoc fashion, up until the sale of the *Star Wars* property from LucasFilm to Disney in 2012 (Graser, 2012). This sale led the way to Disney's current expansion of the franchise including a new series of films beginning with 2015's *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*—the first of a planned series of sequels to the Original Trilogy.

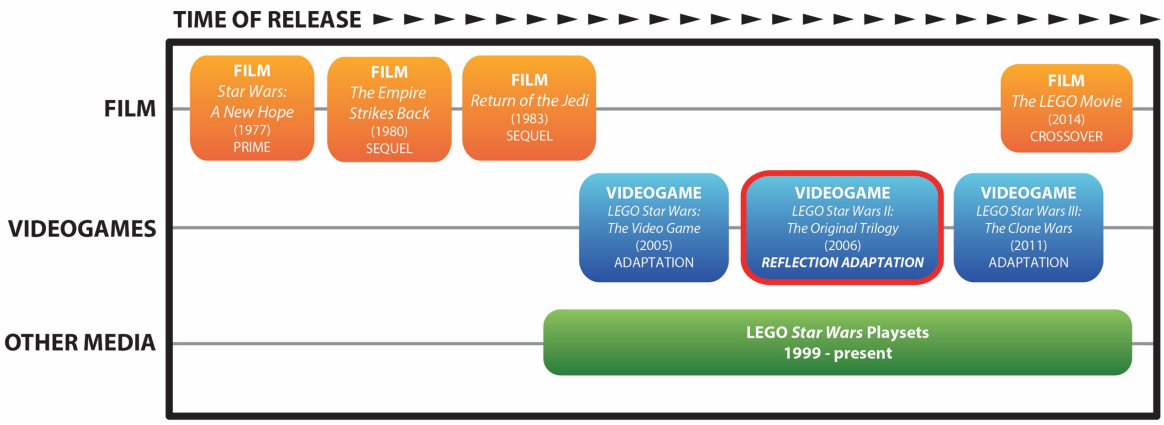

Figure 17. LSWII Transmedia State

Aldred (2014) sees LEGO games as examples of transmedia franchise strategy. This is important to note since this determination equates even Reflection adaptation as a kind of transmedia storytelling according with Wolf's (2012b) conceptualisation of transmediality. Wolf (2014b) contends that LEGO is a medium that is also transmedial, but in addition to this it can be considered "transfranchisal" (p. xxiii). He considers it a

"mediating substance through which ideas can be expressed" (p. xxii). LEGO is the site of various franchises' adaptations in terms of its playsets (e.g. *Harry Potter* LEGO), it is transmedial in the sense that LEGO versions of franchises like *Harry Potter* exist in videogame form, and it is transfranchisal in that media franchises cross over in both playsets, and most astonishingly in terms of the complexity of license negotiation, *The LEGO Movie* (2014).

This chapter has articulated the Reflection Model by presenting case studies of *GoldenEye 007* and *LSWII* which demonstrate differing approaches of games structured around the narrative events of their source film. A fuller comparative discussion and understanding of this model in the context of all three adaptation models is presented in chapter 9. The second model of film-to-game adaptation proposed in this thesis is the Intersection Model, and in direct contrast to the Reflection Model it is the least common type of adaptation. As games exhibiting Intersection characteristics are the scarcest form of movie-licensed game, the following chapter examines only one case study in full.

Chapter 7.

Model 2: Intersection Adaptation

Intersection Model Case Study

Blade Runner (Virgin, 1997)

Introduction: Defining Intersection Adaptation

The second model of film-to-game adaptation I propose is the Intersection Model. Whilst authors such as Brookey (2010) and Hall (2011) make mention of similar concepts I systemise and extend these concepts by applying transmedia theory in the construction of my model. The Intersection Model is the least common form seen in licensed film-to-game adaptation. In summary, it involves a degree of divergence from the source film's narrative to the point of constructing a concurrent plot line, or at the least a series of intersecting points with the hypotext. Hall (2011) includes what would be considered Intersection Model games as part of his second category, however it can be surmised that he does not believe the two types of adaptation significantly differ enough to warrant a separate category; instead he conflates games that fulfil the conditions of both the Intersection Model and the Extension Model. Hall's (2011) description of the former within his second category is stated as "products that function as sequels, prequels, or parallel / alternate narratives (sometimes using dominant points established by films)" (p. 42), and he similarly sees these instances of Intersection Model adaptation to be somewhat rare when considering approaches to movie-licensed games. However, I believe it is worth separating this approach to the phenomenon as it employs distinct involvement with different internarrative elements. Whilst I seek to make categorical distinctions between these two approaches, it is important to note that

both the Intersection Model and the Extension Model can be seen to share commonalities related to internarrativity. Where the Extension Model centers around the most common types of sequence elements (discussed in Chapter 8), the Intersection Model shares connections with two of Wolf's (2012b) more uncommon sequence elements, namely the intraquel and the paraquel.

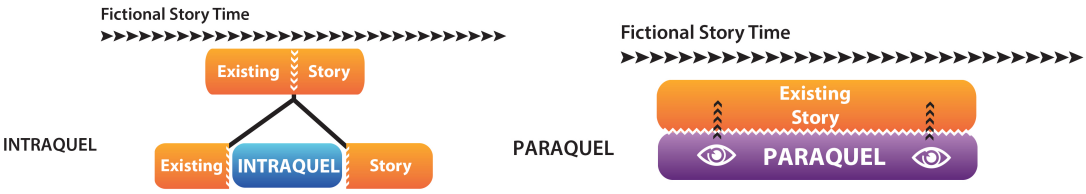

Figure 18. Wolf's Intraquel and Paraquel Sequence Elements

The intraquel and the paraquel (here it is useful to revisit Wolf's [2012b] definitions[112]) emanate from within the narrative frame of the source story rather than dealing with fictional story time beyond the temporality of the source text. The concept of the paraquel sequence element aligns most closely with the Intersection Model of film-to-game adaptation. This is akin to a shift in narrative viewpoint or perspective, commonly employed as a narrational strategy *within* an individual work, while a work that is considered a paraquel employs this change in viewpoint or perspective to encompass an *entire work* from the new perspective. As indicated, there is a clear link here between the concept of the paraquel and the major adaptation strategy of "change in viewpoint" (Stam, 2005). This strategy is commonly seen when adapting a novel-to-film, as it is very common to have first-person narration in a novel while cinema often takes an omniscient viewpoint. Thus, in the novel-to-film adaptation we commonly see a change in viewpoint for certain sections of the novel. A chapter may be written from a

[112] According to Wolf (2012b), a paraquel is: "A narrative sequence element which runs… simultaneously, with an already-existing narrative sequence element or elements, often covering known events from a different perspective. Most paraquels are made *after* the sequence elements they parallel, which limits their events and outcomes the more closely related to existing sequence elements they are. They are thus more likely to introduce new characters and storylines and use the existing events of an imaginary world to set up suspense and provide a background structure. At the same, paraquels can reveal unseen events and provide motivation for the events of a pre-existing sequence element, offering new explanations for known events" (p. 379). Alternately, an intraquel is described as: "A narrative sequence element which fills in a narrative gap within an already existing sequence element. Like an interquel, it is usually more about how one situation developed into another, since both the beginning and end points of the intraquels story are already known to the audience" (Wolf, 2012b, p. 378).

particular character's first-person perspective, and in the film adaptation it becomes third person omniscient.

One of the defining characteristics of this model is the invention of a new character, non-existent in the source film. However, said character must be exploring story events that are either happening at the same time as story events from the hypotext, or even the same story events themselves. When comparing the Intersection Model to the Reflection and Extension Models, invented characters can similarly be found in Extension Model games, however they are generally exploring a different period of time. In Reflection Model games the inverse is generally true—story events are within the same time frame, however there is no invented character, and the player is using an avatar existent in the source film.

This rule doesn't uphold a perfect 1:1 relationship; an overlap can occur here. For example, one could argue, playing through *LSWII* as a different character would make it a paraquel. The game is designed in such a way that you must switch out and play as different characters (with different specialised abilities e.g. Wookie strength) who were not present in the reflected story events from the source film. However, the essential characteristic here, is the idea of "significant addition" (Wolf, 2012b) or narrative depth, meaning the addition of the invented character exploring the same, similar, or parallel story events gives a new insight or a new perspective to the existing story.

Both the Intersection Model and the Extension Model are highly determined by paratextuality, since both approaches to adaptation exhibit what Jenkins (2007) refers to as "transmedia expansion" and what Wolf (2012b) refers to as "transmedial growth" (pp. 245–267). Wolf (2012b) considers the concept of sequence elements with regard to internarrative theory:

> One which runs in tandem (simultaneously) with an existing element or elements (or part of an element), which we might call a *paraquel*. Within a work, the same events are sometimes seen from the perspectives of different characters: the paraquel is an entire work covering the same events or period in time from a different perspective. (p. 210)

This is very similar to change in viewpoint or perspective, where "change" refers to a change in strategy within an individual text: a paraquel is a change in viewpoint or perspective encompassed in an entire work.

Just as with the Reflection Model, salient elements in this model concern story events, story world and characters, character likeness, original voice actors, and world-building design. In addition to presenting the story events of the hypotext, a Reflection Model game may also replicate the plot structure of the film such that the game becomes a type of playable version of the source film. However, narrational factors such as order, duration, frequency, point-of-view, range of story information, and depth of story information may be drastically altered due to the formal differences between cinema and videogames. Scenes from the film may play out in the game, but from a different narrational point-of-view. This change in point-of-view is a defining characteristic of the Intersection Model which is operationalised by virtue of the game's playable character either being a relatively minor character from the source film, or more frequently, a completely invented character.[113]

An abundantly rich example to demonstrate the Intersection Model is the 1997 adaptation of *Blade Runner*. The following case study demonstrates how the game employs paraquel seriality to fashion a distinctive approach to film-to-game adaptation.

[113] It is useful to consider *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* (EA, 2004), as this game can be seen to fit the Intersection Model whilst also demonstrating properties of the transquel. In the game: "characters at times intersect with film events, providing the larger picture of what happened before, elsewhere, or after the heroes of the movies pursue their quest" (Elkington, 2009, p. 220).

Case Study: *Blade Runner* (Virgin, 1997)

Intersection Model adaptation of *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982)[114]

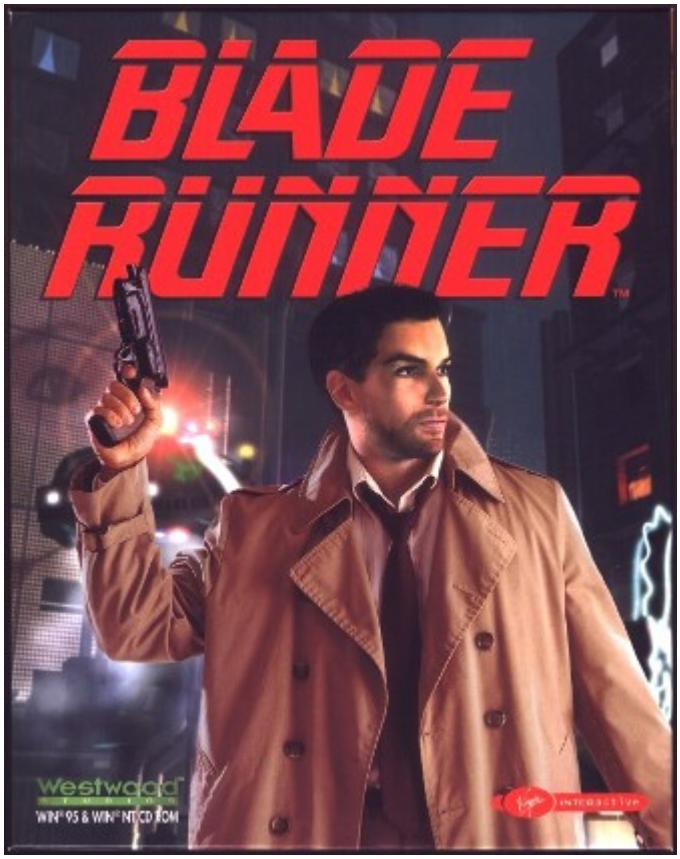

Figure 19. Box Cover Art for *Blade Runner* (1997)

Textual Synopsis

Blade Runner (1982) is a science fiction film set in a dystopian Los Angeles of 2019. Central character Rick Deckard is a Blade Runner, a special class of LAPD detective tasked with locating and terminating ("retiring") a group of renegade androids ("replicants") who have escaped an off-world colony and are hiding out in the underworld of L.A. The replicants are designed and manufactured by the Tyrell Corporation headed by scientific genius, Dr. Elden Tyrell. During the investigation,

[114] As both the film and the game share the same title, I use *Blade Runner* to refer to the film and *Blade Runner* (1997) to refer to the game.

Deckard falls in love with Tyrell's assistant, Rachael, a replicant. The leader of the replicant group, Roy Batty confronts Dr. Tyrell in an effort to find a means of living past his in-built termination date, and when Tyrell explains that he cannot solve his longevity problem, Batty kills him. Deckard retires each of the replicants and in a final confrontation with Batty, Deckard's life is saved by Batty, as Batty acknowledges the end of his lifespan. Deckard subsequently leaves the city with Rachael to begin a new life.

Blade Runner (1997) is a point-and-click adventure game set at the same time as the events of the film. The player-character is Ray McCoy, a Blade Runner very much in the mould of Rick Deckard, albeit unlike Deckard, McCoy is a rookie detective. Beginning with a crime scene involving animal murder, McCoy must collect and analyse clues and conduct interviews with various eyewitnesses and suspects to weave together aspects of McCoy's investigation. McCoy discovers that his investigation has a replicant connection, and so McCoy interviews and interacts with a number of familiar characters from the film such as Dr. Tyrell, Rachael, and JF Sebastian in an effort to solve his case.

Case Study Introduction

Historically, Westwood Studio's *Blade Runner* (1997) is positioned within a period arguably considered to be the height of the adventure game genre's popularity. Hall (2011) analyses *Blade Runner* (1997) as part of a discussion of significant film-to-game adaptations in the period 1995–2004, framing his analysis with regard to games made in this period that exhibit "an increased concern with story and character" (p. 145). Further to this general idea of the game as an exceptional case in movie games, Barry Atkins (2005b) observes:

> *Blade Runner* (PC) might be thought of as something of a landmark in the relatively short history of licensed games, showing ways in which a game might go beyond merely picking up the visual vocabulary of the film as a backdrop before which a generic gaming cliché can be played out, and instead exploit the

> specific strengths of the computer game as an open-ended and played experience, and as an experience of creative possibility within the governance of rules. (Atkins, 2005b, p. 83)

While few movie-licensed games have been treated to detailed analysis,[115] *Blade Runner* (1997) has garnered perhaps more scholarly interest and interpretation than any other.[116] The present discussion draws upon a selection of critical sources on *Blade Runner* (1982) as an adaptation, including Crogan (2002), Atkins (2005b), Tosca (2005), Hall (2011), and Fernández-Vara (2016). This scholarly fascination can be linked to some key ideas: *Blade Runner*'s position as authentic cult object (Hills, 2011), and this source property's status as one of the texts at the forefront of the discussion of transmedia.[117] Initially it may be apt to cite Umberto Eco's (1998) claim of the cult object being figured as "a completely furnished world" (p. 198) as applying to *Blade Runner*, though it may be more appropriate to employ Sara Gwenllian-Jones's (2004, p. ix-x) argument of cult objects as incomplete worlds here. Gwenllian-Jones's argument is that cult objects afford fans and creators the potential for exploration of the cult text. From this perspective, while *Blade Runner* (1997) might be said to adopt the world established in Scott's film, this is not to say that this world is without the potential for expansion. In the game's exhibition of the Intersection Model, it can be seen that the game manages to fill in, expand, and explore these incomplete spaces in a thoughtful and coherent way by picking up the threads of narrative lacunae.

Textual Analysis

McCoy: "Deckard. That vet Blade Runner had been all over the city today, almost always one step ahead of me."

[115] This considers not only all of the case study games presented in this dissertation, but indeed all film-to-game adaptations.

[116] Though compared with scholarship on the film and its variants, critical interpretation devoted to the game adaptation is but a tiny fraction.

[117] Henry Jenkins employs the figure of *Blade Runner's* origami unicorn as a central symbol of transmediality. See Jenkins (2006a) for instance.

Narrative form

Temporally, the events of the game take place parallel to the events of the source film, and here we see the crucial textual characteristic of the Intersection Model in action—the invention of a new playable character who is exploring the same world as the film's protagonist. Spatially, the game is set in the same locale as the film, with the player-character exploring certain specific locations seen in the film's *mise-en-scène*. While the game does not directly reproduce narrative events from the source film, it does make explicit references to certain events, thus the game intersects both time and place with relation to the hypotext. Game developers Westwood Studios can be seen to have set out with a clear intention of creating an intersection between the game and the film, which they call "parallel narrative" ("Blade Runner—Looking Back with Louis Castle", 2015). This intention, along with the 13 different potential endings of the game, creates a sense of narrative bifurcation consistent with the Intersection Model.

From the game's opening title scroll which recreates exactly what was displayed in the film, *Blade Runner* (1997) restages and co-opts shots from the hypotext but crucially inserts invented characters who are substitutes for certain characters from the film. The main example here is player-character McCoy as Deckard doppelgänger: his manner, voice-over, and apartment are all Deckard without being Deckard; he revisits spaces Deckard occupies in the film, and even replays some scenes on a shot-for-shot basis. The game often refers to parallel missing characters, giving us logic as to where they are, and also enforcing the notion of the game's temporality occurring in tandem with the story events from the film. Thus with the addition of McCoy, we see the central defining aspect of a paraquel—an invented character exploring the same locations as the source film at slightly different times, exploring parallel story events that are unseen in the source film. *Blade Runner* (1997) is composed entirely of events running parallel to the hypotext—the game presents what's going on *at the same time* as Deckard's story.

According to Wolf (2012b), a paraquel is "A narrative sequence element which runs parallel, that is, simultaneously, with an already-existing narrative sequence element or elements, often *covering known events* from a different perspective" (p. 379). Key here is this idea of covering *known events*—in *Blade Runner* (1997), we *never* replay a known event from the source film, McCoy *only* engages in events that are happening in

parallel to Deckard's story events.[118] Hall (2011) refers to the game as exhibiting a multi-linear structure that is "a recreation and revision of the world" (p. 145) of the film, as the game exhibits what he calls a "companion narrative" (p. 148). Here we see the application of the aforementioned change in viewpoint or perspective, where "change" refers to a change in strategy within an individual text: a paraquel is a change in viewpoint or perspective encompassed in an entire work. Extending this idea to consider the entire work in the case of *Blade Runner* (1997), we see the story events of the source film from the viewpoint of the player who enacts a different character not existent in the source film.

With the creation of the doppelgänger substitute characters, the game promotes a strange déjà vu sensation, with some scenes templating those from the original film. An example here is Lieutenant Guzza, who is a substitute for the film's Captain Bryant. Guzza is situated in the frame in exactly the same position as his source doppelgänger from the film, speaks in the same gruff voice and is sitting at his desk. The game makes overt reference to this refashioned scene with the player-character's entrance: "Where's Bryant?" McCoy asks. To which Guzza replies, "He took a sick day." In relation to this phenomenon, Crogan (2002) states, "the game is an uncanny double of the film, familiar yet strange" (p. 653).

An interesting lens with which to view this notion of déjà vu is through Elliot's (2004) concept of "ventriloquism," which she describes as: "empt[ying] out the novel's signs and fill[ing] them with filmic spirits… The adaptation, like a vent, props up the dead novel, throwing its voice onto the silent corpse" (p. 226). By swapping out the terms "novel" and "film" for the analogous "film" and "videogame," we can see where the videogame adaptation adds the potential richness and complexity of the new medium's narrative architecture to revivify the original.

Considering the similarities between Deckard and McCoy, it can be read to suggest their twin-like tendencies represent two versions of a particular model, the Blade

[118] Strictly speaking, the paraquel replays events from a point of view alternative to that of the source material. Alternatively, one could argue its position as more of a intraquel than a paraquel in that the game's events are ones that take place at the same time as the source film but are not represented or referred to in the source film.

Runner model, and hence are replicants. Reading McCoy as a replicant supports the notion that McCoy as invented character, is contributing new insight into the existing story and series as a whole. When revisiting the original cut version of the source film[119] after playing the game, one may have a new interpretation of the film that views Deckard as replicant.

World-building

The game evokes many stylistic aspects of the source film with a strong sense of homage, mimicking the chiaroscuro lighting design, the use of extensive voice-over, and the film's *mise-en-scène* in a series of locations. Multiple locations are recreated including the police station, Chinatown, the Bradbury building, Tyrell Corporation, Eye World, and the Yukon Hotel. Hub areas such as the ESPER Room in the police station provide a space that the player returns to repeatedly in order to examine photographs collected during the investigation.

Fernández-Vara (2016) considers *Blade Runner* (1997) as an example of transmedia storytelling, arguing that the game is "inescapably intertextual," (p. 22) since it draws on both the film and the source novel. She privileges the concept of world-building as central to transmediality, articulating several factors associated with this, namely the recreation of locations, and the use of props for interaction. Fernández-Vara also discusses the intersecting nature of the game's narrative with the source film, highlighting moments where the game directly addresses the hypotext, in addition to the evocation of the key themes of the source material.

Several characters from the film are recreated in the game, using character models based on the original actors, as well as the actor's voices. Invented characters are entirely consistent with the larger character ensemble seen in the hypotext. Close-ups on characters' faces exist in cut-scenes, however, the in-game dialogue exchanges play out predominantly in a wide shot framing, which places more emphasis on spaces and art direction than the character models.

[119] As there are many versions of *Blade Runner* in circulation, and while other versions may imply that Deckard is a replicant, this is generally seen not to be the case in the original cut of the film. In this sense the game is responding to later cuts of the film but also has the potential for the player to reconsider their experience of the original cut of the film.

The esteemed film critic Pauline Kael (1986) made explicit reference to fictional geography in her review of the film: "Ridley Scott isn't great on mise-en-scene—we're never sure exactly what part of the city we're in, or where it is in relation to the scene before and the scene after. (Scott seems to be trapped in his own alleyways, without a map.)" (pp. 360-361). There's no doubt that the geography in *Blade Runner* is dense and labyrinthine (Bukatman, 1997); in some sense Kael's comment is fair, especially on first viewing. In response to this geographical confusion, the game presents space at a macro level by virtue of the city map which is navigated using McCoy's spinner, and at street-level by the use of camera edits between locations. In some situations, the camera cranes around or pulls out to the effect of stitching adjacent locations together without using a camera cut. On-screen spaces from the source film are also connected to created spaces; in some cases, on-screen spaces are shown to be connected to other on-screen spaces. For instance, in the game, The Bradbury Building is located around the corner from Eye World. In this way, the game creates a spatial cohesion necessary for the player to navigate the world in a practical fashion. Atkins (2005b) equates Gaff's creation of *Blade Runner*'s origami unicorn from flat paper into a 3D object, with the potential richness of the navigable dimensionality of a videogame (p. 89).

Atkins (2005b) investigates methods by which the game remediates the film (following Bolter & Grusin, 2000), observing the use of voiceover acting as internal monologue in which the player-character mulls over discovered clues in the investigation and elucidates them to the player. In the film, the use of voiceover is a key narrative technique but also conjures a connection to classic film noir detective fiction from the 1940s and 50s.

Interactivation

Genre choice and execution form the centerpiece of interactivation in *Blade Runner* (1997). Fernández-Vara (2009) defines the adventure game genre thus:

> Adventure games are story-driven videogames, which encourage exploration and puzzle solving and always have at least one player-character. The basic interaction of adventure games is based on object manipulation and spatial navigation. Their

> challenges usually appear in the form of concatenated puzzles, which are integrated in the fictional world. (p. 13)

Crogan (2002) examines the game in relation to game interactivity and storytelling as a whole. The point-and-click nature of the game is melded with key tropes of the adventure game genre such as mystery and discovery, themes that find their parallels in detective fiction and are therefore entirely consistent with the tone of *Blade Runner*. Fernández-Vara (2009) discusses the significance of the detective story and its relationship to puzzles within the adventure genre as a whole, as well as themes and conventions from detective fiction as playing a key part in embedded storytelling within the adventure genre (pp. 84-85). Other instances of interactivation discussed by Atkins (2005b) include the way in which players navigate the game space, and the use of the ESPER machine to analyse clues. This device is present in the film and is used to take a photograph and then search the virtual space of the physical 2-D image.

Tosca (2005) analyses the game's narrative puzzle mechanics to investigate ideas about choice and replay-ability, free will and agency, considering how these concepts impact on the key themes of humanity and identity, while also addressing the question of whether detective McCoy may be a replicant. Depending on the play-through and the randomised generation of the initial character, Non-Player-characters, and even the player-character, may be either a replicant or a human.

In terms of player agency, there is a close relationship between the key activities of Deckard in the source film, with McCoy's activities in the game adaptation by virtue of the selection and implementation of the adventure game genre. The player spends a high percentage of time in the game dissecting conversations, searching for clues, and revisiting subjects to determine the next course of action. This puts the player in a cerebral state, one which is closely associated with Deckard's own perspective for the majority of the film.

The game sets up conditions in such a way that the player must embody the detective mindset, so that in scenes where the player must administer the Voigt-Kampff Test, a sense of suspicion is adopted when attempting to determine whether the subject is a replicant or human, and this has a flow on effect to the rest of the game. Fernández-

Vara (2016) also examines the relevance of the player's decision-making to the wider metaphoric theme of "who is a human, who is a replicant." She notes that "the game interprets whether the player is acting like a replicant or not depending on how the player behaves towards certain characters, which lends an ontological instability that parallels the ambiguity found in the film and in the novel" (p. 29). In an earlier discussion of *Blade Runner* (1997), Tosca proposes its narrative relevance as a game that manages to "offer a certain level of narrative complexity due to the efficacy of the decision branching and the significance of the different game endings" (Tosca as quoted in Tosca, 2005, p. 93).

Contextual Analysis

Blade Runner (1997) represents an example of film-to-game adaptation made 15 years following the source film's release, as well as following a handful of sequel novels published in the 1990s; therefore it is an example of both a non-simultaneous development and a non-simultaneous release.[120] Even at the time of writing, the game exhibits interest and a continued fandom[121] due to the game's approach to the source material as well as its level of intrinsic excellence as demonstrated by its critical reputation. The game's development team actively consulted with a number of the film's creatives in addition to employing original actors from the film to provide likenesses and voice talent. The development team had access to film creatives which allowed them to not only recreate spaces seen in the source film, but contiguous spaces surrounding the known ones. The choice of locating the game within the point-and-click adventure genre allows the film noir detective elements to be privileged within the

[120] As mentioned in Chapter 6, the Westwood *Blade Runner* game was not the first videogame based on the film *Blade Runner*; there exists a 1985 release that is not an adaptation of the film, but an adaptation of the soundtrack (due to licensing issues).

[121] See for instance http://www.brmovie.com/Game/index1.htm
For various rights reasons, the game has never been reissued, nor has it been available on such platforms as *Steam* or *Good Old Games*. By virtue of these reasons, vintage game connoisseur quality has been ascribed to *Blade Runner* (1997) as well as fans of the game continually calling for a sequel to be made.

game's design paradigm, highlighting detective elements by way of puzzles and deduction.

Blade Runner is a cult film par excellence (Brooker, 2005) and there have been multiple versions of the film re-cut and re-released over the years[122] with a dedicated fan following, evidenced with the release of the five-disc collector's edition following *The Final Cut* version in 2007.[123] A parallel exists between this following and the reception of the game, which has garnered its own dedicated fan following (Hills, 2011). In both cases it should be noted that this fandom can be linked to that associated with Philip K. Dick's original novel.

The question of "what is adapted" is an interesting one with *Blade Runner* (1997), as we can identify the game's success in harnessing some of the more nebulous central ideologies and philosophical questions of the novel and a later version of the film. At the time of the game's production, the developers had access to the *Blade Runner: The Director's Cut* (Scott, 1992) version of the film[124] which provided the possibility for reinterpretation of Deckard's status as a human, suggesting that he himself may be a replicant. Yet this ambiguity of "who is human, who is a replicant" permeates the game, even hinting that the new central character McCoy may himself be a replicant in one possible ending. The various endings fit with the thematics of the film, which in the director's release allows for a personalised audience interpretation to deduce Deckard's status as replicant or human. The game is also able to represent the bigger philosophical question of "what does being human mean?"

Development Account

In an interview with Westwood Studio's game director, Louis Castle, he names *Blade Runner* as his favourite film (RagnarRox 2015, n.p.), and expresses how he set out with a desire to "recreate the feeling" of the film. He describes the mood in Scott's films *Blade Runner* and *Alien* as having "a sense of terror and discovery," and highlights the

[122] See Sammon (2017) for a detailed history of the various versions of the film.
[123] This included the "work print" of the film, an extremely rare occurrence. The film is known for its various releases which fans have mined for greater insight into its mysteries. See Hills (2011).
[124] This version of the film was one of the earliest DVD releases in March of 1997, arriving in the marketplace seven months prior to the game adaptation release.

importance of the tonal aspect of these films, in particular the anticipation of a lurking imminent violence that could erupt at any given time. Castle explains his primary aim of attempting to transfer this feeling into the game (RagnarRox, 2015, n.p.).

Castle expresses the clearly considered intention *not* to repeat the story events from the film, but to create an intersecting narrative:

> We were such big fans of the film that we didn't want to retell the film. That felt completely predictive, which would have destroyed the idea of the detective story... We wanted lots of opportunity for the player to have some influence on the world. The essence of the game was whether or not you were a replicant or a human. (RagnarRox, 2015, n.p.)

Castle recalls how *Blade Runner* producer Bud Yorkin's first draft, an attempted videogame script, just didn't work. Instead, he was asked to write a movie script for a hypothetical *Blade Runner* sequel. This gave Westwood a cast of characters so in keeping with the movie's bitterness that, to a portion of the fan community, are considered canon.

Westwood's success in acquiring the license was seemingly interconnected with this Intersection approach to the adaptation, as detailed in their winning pitch to the Ladd Company which beat out many other studio bids. An online *Edge* article "The Making of *Blade Runner*" examines the pitching process and what restrictions were in place: "When the Blade Runner Partnership, having gone through EA, Sierra and Mediagenic (aka Activision), approached Virgin with plans for an official game, the complexities of the licence had yet to be revealed" ("The Making of *Blade Runner*," 2013, n.p.). In the same article, Castle details the licensing pitfalls they faced when constructing their pitch: "we were prohibited from using any footage or audio because we'd never know whose rights we might be trampling on" ("The Making of *Blade Runner*," 2013, n.p.). The design team decided on "concurrent play" as a high-level game design strategy. Castle explains:

> Anything that happens in the film still happens in the game and there's no way to effect [*sic*] those things but the backstory of what happens off-screen was

> something that player could effect [*sic*]…So we let you fill in the backstory of the film and carry it much beyond where the film ends. (RagnarRox, 2015, n.p.)

The *Edge* article reflects that this process of sidestepping limitations can be likened to landing Westwood the job: "Before any of it emerged, Castle's pitch already described a very rare kind of tie-in that would 'add value rather than borrow it'" ("The Making of *Blade Runner*," 2013, n.p.).

In a *Gamasutra* interview, Castle details the design process:

> We abstracted the script and tried to identify the pacing and emotional beats of the film. Finally we created a unique script with this knowledge and then tried to make a simulation that "allowed" the script to happen, but did not constrain the player to tell only one story. (Stern, 1998, n.p.)

Castle sidestepped some of the design restrictions with not having access to the original designs by hiring a crew member from the art department:

> I went and found the guy in charge of doing the sets for the film—not the designer but the engineer… We hired him as a consultant and said: "Look, here are the concept drawings of the set for, let's say Deckard's office or home, and here's what's in the film. How did you get from there to there?" He said: "Well, we looked at Syd Mead's stuff and said we'd love to do it, but we don't have a million dollars to build each set. So we just went to the scrapyard, these props rooms, and grabbed anything similar and just bolted it on, spray-painted it and whatever we had to do to get it as close as we could." With that revelation, I went back to our 3D artists and said: "Look, you have access to these 3D libraries with all this stuff you can use, and you're no longer permitted to make anything from scratch. You can only cull things and modify them; you can cut it, repaint it and scale it, but you can't rebuild." Using that same discipline, we got a look in the game that felt very, very close. ("Future Imperfect," n.d., n.p.)

Castle displays pride regarding his efforts creating the *Blade Runner* world, using the term "authenticity" to refer to the relationship of the game to the film (RagnarRox, 2015, n.p.).

Critical & Player Reception

Key points relating to textual factors featured in *Blade Runner*'s (1997) reception are excerpted from critics' (underlined) and players' (non-underlined) reviews and comments and are presented in Table 9.

Blade Runner (1997) holds a MobyRank of 87. The game does not have a Metacritic score.

Game as Adaptation

"…the resulting quality of *Blade Runner*'s videogame adaptation came…as a surprise to me, and proved that Westwood still had some life in it…it doesn't make the mistake of trying to adapt the movie per se, but instead takes the basic material and runs with it, creating a brand-new story with new characters that runs parallel to the movie's plot. Yes, you are a Blade Runner that looks exactly like Harrison Ford, but you are not him and in fact you are investigating a completely different case that starts from a Replicant assault at a pet store and evolves from that point on." (Zovni, 2004, n.p.)

"While you won't actually run into Deckard…his presence will be felt during the game." (*Blade Runner*, 1997, n.p.)

"For those who aren't familiar with the movie, you might have a tougher time appreciating this, and for good reason, since there are other games out there that are longer, more complex, and better designed." (Anonymous Gamer, 2005, n.p.)

"Unfortunately, most of what's interesting about the game is exactly what was interesting about the film, and not much was done to extend the concepts or explore them any further. Fans of the film will undoubtedly overlook the game's flaws and enjoy living the life of the *Blade Runner*, even if it only lasts a few hours. But those who are awaiting the next generation of adventure games are advised to keep waiting." (Dulin, 1997, n.p.)

Narrative

"Westwood's *Blade Runner* proves that you don't have to follow the script to make an authentic movie tie-in. Not, at least, when the movie's better known for its looks and symbols than its words." (Mott, 2010, p 322)

"The story is also worthy of its heritage, an extension of the *Blade Runner* story that has all of the mood and feel of the film." (*Blade Runner*, 1997, n.p.)

"Following the many wild interpretations of the movie's story, Westwood gave players the excellent choice to allow you to swing into any direction as far as the plot is concerned, and depending on how you play the game you can end up running from the law as a replicant exile yourself, or doing your work as a human Blade Runner and closing the case like a good boy." (Zovni, 2004, n.p.)

"On one hand it is cool that the game is set around the time of the film, but that also causes some contradictions." (MasterMegid, 2007, n.p.)

"…the story completely fails as a detective story…Example Number 1: Our hero questions a witness, but has doubts about his truthfulness. He warns the witness that if he is caught lying, he'll pay him another visit. Later in the game, we find absolute proof the witness was lying. However, questioning the witness is no longer an option in the game…These are just a few examples of the way the story fails to progress logically." (Nessman, 2004, n.p.)

Mood and Atmosphere

"The designers have managed to invoke the mood of the film, re-creating a neon-lit Los Angeles constantly bombarded by rain. The perennial *Blade Runner* images are here, including the winking woman in the Coca-Cola billboard and vehicles flying over the flaming smokestacks of the industrial outskirts." (Dulin, Gamespot.com, *Blade Runner Review*, 1997, n.p.)

"It's raining all the time, neon signs flash, people in shabby clothes walk around on dirty streets, and flying machines cover the sky. One thing the game does almost impeccably is capture the atmosphere of the movie." (Cor, Moby Games user review, 2002, n.p.)

"If you're a fan of the source material, it's likely you can look past the game's inherent problems. It has lots of great *Blade Runner* moments that will have fans smiling knowing full well the developers are giving them a wink and a nod." (Anonymous Gamer, 2005, n.p.)

"*Blade Runner* succeeds in imitating the movie, pushing the right buttons to create atmosphere and compelling fans of the original material to eagerly overlook its gameplay deficiencies. However, those looking for a well-constructed, challenging adventure game should look elsewhere." (Cor 13, 2002, n.p.)

Game Mechanics

"The developer of *Command & Conquer* wasn't known for its point-and-click adventures…which perhaps explains its avant-garde approach to this one. A necessary approach, it would emerge, that captured not just the Los Angeles of 2019 but the legwork, paperwork, and luck required to police it. McCoy's puzzle solving has more in common with a *Police Quest* game than the average point-and-click. Rather than find illogical key-and-lock pairings for random objects, he has to pixel hunt for clues, feed them into some familiar forensic tools, and ask the right questions of the right people. Leads turn into new locations on the map, suspects coming and going in nonlinear real time. What results is a game of lucky breaks and chance encounters that boasts a whopping thirteen different endings." (Mott, 2010, p. 322)

"Each time you begin a new game, some elements within the game will change. Certain characters are always the same, be it human or replicant, but others are chosen at random with each new game. A character that is human in one game may be a replicant the next time you play. This allows for a replayability factor not usually present in an adventure game." (*Blade Runner*, 1997, n.p.)

"Other things unique to the *Blade Runner* game include, being able to administer the Voigt-Kampff Test. It checks the emotional response of the test-taker, with questions such as: 'What would you do if some one served you dog?' Many of the questions are from the film, and novel. The test tells the test administrator if the subject is or is not a replicant. If they are in fact a replicant you have the option of retiring the subject. This is one of the coolest aspects of gameplay." (MasterMegid, 2007, n.p.)

"Instead of having the player make thoughtful choices, *Blade Runner* forces the player to move the mouse over every square inch of the screen in an attempt to find the magic 'hotspot' where the golden key is concealed…Don't waste your time. The game is beautiful to behold and absolutely awe-inspiring at first, but the story does not progress logically. In the end, *Blade Runner* disappoints." (Nessman, 2004, n.p.)

World-building

"Visually speaking the game nails the look of the movie perfectly. The graphic artists were able to emulate the dark urban landscape created by Syd Mead and Ridley Scott in the original movie with aplomb." (Anonymous Gamer, 2005, n.p.)

"The production values for the game are dead on. A must really, as *Blade Runner* the movie was all about creating a visual and aureal 'vibe' that could only be done with quality visuals and the unique Vangelis soundtrack. The game uses a collection of pre-rendered backgrounds and even looping fmv's to illustrate the gameworld (which brings to your monitor all those haunting neon reflections, murky streets and foggy landscapes) with voxel characters placed on top." (Zovni, 2004, n.p.)

"The game world is modeled after that of the film and somewhat from the novel. Which is a nice touch. Many areas were re-created based exactly from the film." (MasterMegid, Moby Games User Review, 2007, n.p.)

Sound

"The soundtrack and sfx are excellent, basing the entire work around Vangelis and complementing the gameworld perfectly." (Zovni, 2004, n.p.) / "The audio in *Blade Runner* is nearly perfect. With Vangelis' awe-inspiring score. All the music from the film is here. As well as some new arrangements from Westwood. From 'Blade Runner Blues' one of my favorites, to the retro sounding, 'One More Kiss Dear.'" (MasterMegid, 2007, n.p.)

"The moody music fits the game nicely, and both the graphics and the music manage to reflect the dark, post-apocalyptic setting very well." (Cor 13, 2002, n.p.)

Character Representation

"Character graphics are quite blurry and sorely lacking close-ups during dialogues,

making gameplay curiously static and devoid of a component that apparently should be among the first priorities when designing a game based on a movie: cinematic direction. Watching characters wave hands constantly while talking without being able to see their faces properly is not particularly exciting. There are no subtitles, and often I simply couldn't hear what the characters were saying." (Cor 13, 2002, n.p.)
Transmedia "Of all the games I've played in my life, *Blade Runner* is one of the best. It has been a few years since I played it, but I remember watching the movie (again) afterwards. During the movie, as good as it was, I felt there was something missing. The 'missing' pieces were things I had done in the game!" (Jeanne, 2002, n.p.)

Table 9. Blade Runner Critical and Player Reception

Considering the game's structure as representative of the Intersection Model, there can be gleaned a general sense of success with this approach to adaptation and its narrative relation to the source film. Indeed, one player essentially considers taking a Reflection Adaptation approach to a movie-licensed game is a "mistake" and so praises *Blade Runner*'s approach.

Germane to the responses from critics is the notion of design accomplishment in replicating the look and feel of the original film. Multiple players comment on the successful translation of the film to game in the sense of visual world-building. Audio is singled out as an impressive contribution to the game design, even though the original soundtrack was not secured for use in the game due to rights issues. In terms of point-and-click adventure gameplay, critic Tony Mott attributes the designer's inexperience with the particular genre to creating some atypical solutions, to positive effect. Notable here is the enjoyable interactivation of the film's "Voigt-Kampff Test."

Audience relationship to the source film was a central factor in the response to the game, as players tend to agree that fans of the source film might be more readily

accepting of the game's shortcomings. When considering the narrative, players make connections between the adapted game's relationship to the confusing nature of the source film's plot, with one player noting that the film's "missing pieces" are braided into the game, in a clear instance of transmedia storytelling.

However, not all players found the approach to narrative a satisfying one. These comments about the nebulous plot bear a direct connection to the early criticisms of the film. *New Yorker* critic Pauline Kael was lost following the story of the film:

> [*Blade Runner*] sets you down in this lopsided maze of a city, with its post-human feeling, and keeps you persuaded that something bad is about to happen. Some the scenes seem to have six subtexts but no text, and no context either. There are suggestions of Nicolas Roeg in the odd, premonitory atmosphere, but Roeg gives promise of something perversely sexual. With Scott, it's just something unpleasant or ugly. (Kael, 1986, p. 362)

Kael makes the claim that director Ridley Scott is too focused on design to care about telling a cohesive narrative.

Paratextual Analysis

Adaptation System

Blade Runner (1997) is identified as category B1 in the Adaptation System—as the 1982 film is itself an adaptation of a source novel from 1968, titled *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by science fiction master Philip K. Dick. Two subsequent novels were released as sequels to the film: *Blade Runner 2: The Edge of Human* (1995), and *Blade Runner 3: Replicant Night* (1996). A sixteen-year gap following the 1982 film preceded the release of the videogame in 1997.

At the time of the original release of the film in 1982, critical reaction was largely scathing (Hills, 2011; Sammon, 2017), primarily due to the film's complexity and density. For a science fiction film released during the era of high concept films such as

E.T. Extra Terrestrial (1982) and *The Black Hole* (Nelson, 1979), the film's cult fandom emerged slowly over the intervening decade, eventually culminating in facilitating the release of *The Director's Cut* version in 1992. Due to the surprising overwhelmingly positive response to the 1992 *Director's Cut*, the film's fandom reached new heights (Hills, 2011). This new widespread popularity gave rise to the sequel novels and in part led to the development of the 1997 videogame.

Transmedia State

World-building can be classed as both paratextual *and* textual—asking the question: what does the world of the game share with the world of the film? World-building as we know is a key transmedia factor, and in terms of videogames is both a narrative concern as well as an aesthetic one. In other words, the look and the feel of a game world communicates narrational information, or, the narrative architecture incorporates aesthetic elements as well as traditional narrative elements such as characters, events and point of view. The case of *Blade Runner* (1997) is very literal in the expression of narrative architecture, in that game spaces *communicate* narrative in the interactive searching for clues.

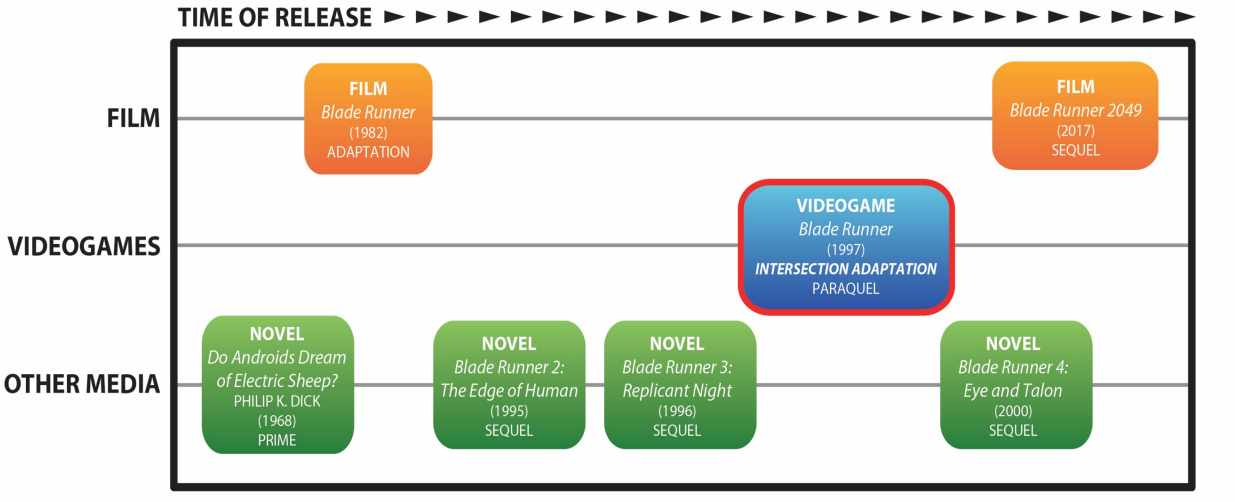

Figure 20. Blade Runner (1997) Transmedia State

With every new entry in a series, new textual information is available to the audience, and this has a ripple effect upon the reception of all other entries in a series. When considering *Blade Runner* as an entire property, this is a particularly interesting case. With the release of *The Director's Cut*, the film property's principal author, Ridley Scott, firmly establishes his original intention for Deckard's status as either human or replicant to be ambiguous. Once viewers have seen this cut of the film, it is very difficult to play through the game without applying this same suspicion to Deckard's doppelgänger player-character McCoy.

Since *Blade Runner* (1982) was adapted from a novel, several scholarly critiques analysing the relationship between novel and film exist within adaptation studies (see Kerman, 1991). The 1997 game is therefore a second iteration adaptation, and it is clear that the game adaptation draws not only from the 1982 film but also from Dick's original novel. In this way, the game enforces a type of adaptational authenticity by placing emphasis on elements from the literary hypotext—concepts and concrete story elements that exclusively reside in the novel are only touched on in the film are explored to a far greater extent in the game.

Examples of elements that are emphasised in the novel can be seen in the game's extensive reference to fake animals, which is a much more direct and significant element in the novel, and only a minor reference in the film. Likewise, the element of "kipple," which is the term for unwanted or useless objects in the property's world, plays a bigger part in the game than it does in the film. It is described as such in the novel: "Kipple is useless objects, like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday's homeopape. When nobody's around, kipple reproduces itself... the entire universe is moving towards a final state of total, absolute kipple-ization" (Dick, 1988, p. 53). In the film, kipple is present only in a visual background capacity as part of the *mise-en-scène*, but in the game, kipple is an ecological and political problem that plays a part (albeit minor) in the world of the game.

While Chapter 9 compares all three adaptation models with reference to multiple case studies, Chapter 7 presents the practice of paraquel seriality found in Intersection Model adaptation through an analysis of one game, *Blade Runner* (1997). The final case

studies exhibit the remaining permutations of seriality as described by Wolf (2012b). Whilst the Intersection Model is the rarest form of film-to-game adaptation, the following chapter examines a far more prevalent type of transmedia expansion in the form of Extension Model adaptation.

Chapter 8.

Model 3: Extension Adaptation

Extension Model Case Studies

The Thing (Vivendi Universal, 2002)

The Warriors (Rockstar, 2005)

Alien: Isolation (Sega, 2014)

Defining the Extension Model

The third film-to-game model I propose is the Extension Model. It builds on the ideas put forth by Brookey (2010), Elkington (2009), and Hall (2011) whilst incorporating concepts from transmedia theory. The Extension Model is aligned within Wolf's (2012b) ideas on transmedial growth, with the internarrative concept of seriality at the forefront. An Extension Model adaptation utilises several formal elements from the film hypotext. Often it can act as a direct prequel or sequel to the source film, but it may also extend the existing fictional story timeline far into the future or past, as well as function as an interquel between two existing entries in the series. Jess-Cooke and Verevis (2010) distinguish between sequels, series, and serials in their delineation of the sequel form in relation to cinema, by stating: "whereas seriality and series defy change, the sequel champions difference, progress and excess" (p. 5). To unpack this statement, Jess-Cooke and Verevis's articulation of the terms "series" and "seriality" refer to instances where entries are discrete entities in which there is no "series memory" per se, whereas in the sequel, narrational information carries forward from entry to entry, creating linkages between each. This idea of series memory is at the core of the

Extension Model, as works belonging to this model exhibit narrative braids with an aim to create continuity across the series.

In an effort to define the Extension Model, it is useful to revisit Wolf's (2012b) theory of sequence elements; the four germane to this model are the sequel, the prequel, the interquel, and the intraquel (discussed in Chapter 2—see below).

Figure 21. Sequel Diagram

A sequel (Figure 21) is narrative sequence element which follows an already-existing sequence element (Wolf, 2012b, p. 381).

Jess-Cooke and Verevis (2010) describe the sequel thus:

> In contradistinction to the remake, the sequel does not prioritize the repetition of an original, but rather advances an exploration of alternatives, differences, and re-enactments that are discretely charged with the various ways in which we may reread, remember, or return to a source. Concomitant with the gamut of merchandizing tie-ins, cross-media platforms, and film franchises that inform contemporary Hollywood cinema, the sequel is primarily a site within which communal spectatorship and paratextual discourses may be circulated, and by which the experience of an "original" may be extended, revisited, and heightened. (p. 5)

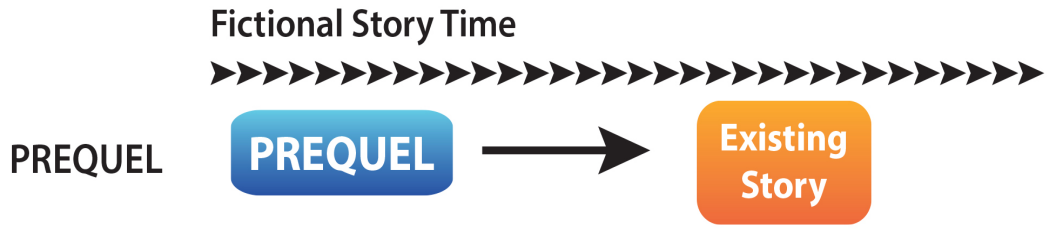

Figure 22. Prequel Diagram

Wolf (2012b) identifies the second most common sequence element as the prequel (Figure 22), in which a narrative sequence element comes before an already-existing sequence element, usually revealing how characters and situations came to be, thus often providing backstory for them (p. 380).

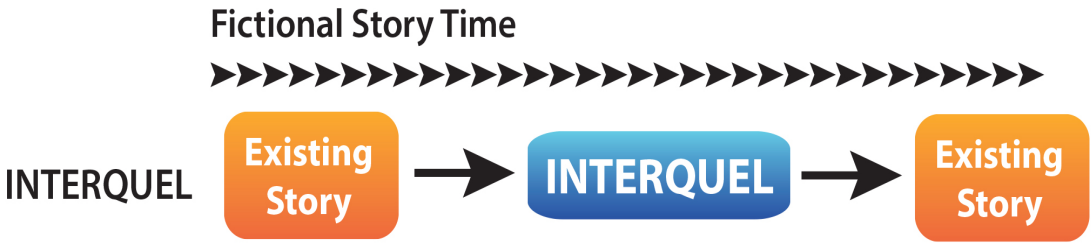

Figure 23. Interquel Diagram

More infrequently seen is the interquel (Figure 23), a narrative sequence element that fits chronologically between two already-existing narrative elements in the same sequence. (Wolf, 2012b, p. 377).

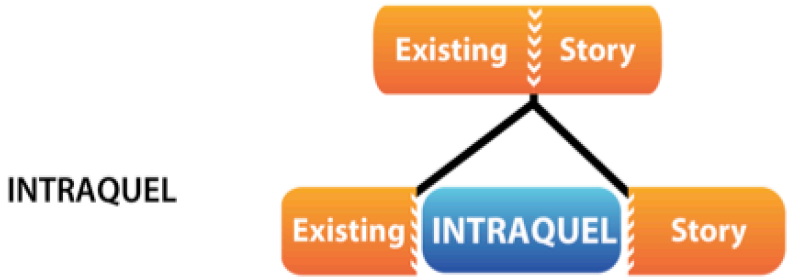

Figure 24. Intraquel Diagram

An inverted permutation of the interstitial story element is the intraquel (Figure 24), a narrative that exists in a timeframe within an elliptical gap present in an existing work, such as in the unseen events signalled by an ellipsis. An important distinction to make here is that the intraquel narrative is entirely unseen and a complete work on its own, so this is not to be confused with the kind of temporal expansion seen in Reflection Model adaptation.

The games that are considered Extension Model adaptations are examples of transmedia expansion and transmedial growth by virtue of them having an internarrative relationship with the source film. Sequels, prequels, interquels, and intraquels add significantly to the narrative of the overall property. It is prudent to be clear that in this study, I define internarrative elements relative to their original publication or release date. For example, if there are subsequent sequels in a series that are released after the initial release of the first sequel, I do not consider it an interquel. As discussed in Chapter 3 in the section on transmediality, the concept of narrative braids functions to create continuity from entry to entry within a transmedia property. Wolf (2012b) summarises the key types germane to the Extension Model:

> Stories may have… multiple threads which share the same locations, minor characters, and other details, but with no causal linkages between threads (*diegetic braiding*); and threads with causal linkages between them, in which the events of one thread have outcomes in other threads (*causal braiding*). (p. 199)

Both diegetic and causal braiding operate across all internarrative sequence elements and are most significant in relation to the Extension Model as is evidenced in the following case studies of *The Thing* (2002), *The Warriors* (2005), and *Alien: Isolation*.

Case Study: *The Thing* (Vivendi Universal, 2002)

Extension Model adaptation of *The Thing* (Carpenter, 1982)[125]

Figure 25. Box Cover Art for *The Thing* (2002)

Textual Synopsis

The Thing (1982) is a science fiction horror film set in Antarctica in a remote research facility, "American Research Facility Base 31." A group of scientists and military personnel including military pilot RJ MacReady come up against a parasitic extraterrestrial creature that has infiltrated the base and begins to use the personnel as hosts. Paranoia sets into the small isolated group as to who has become a 'Thing-creature,' and who is still human.

[125] As both the film and the game share the same title, "*The Thing*" is used to refer to the film and "*The Thing* videogame" or *The Thing* (2002) to refer to the game.

The Thing (2002) is a third person survival horror game that follows on from the aftermath of the events of the source film. The player embodies Captain JF Blake who is tasked with leading a team of military personnel to investigate the American Base's destruction, only to come up against waves of Thing-creatures they must battle for survival. In-game combat must be balanced with a constant monitoring of allies, calming the fears of squad mates and engendering a level of trust. It becomes clear that the Thing-creature may have used squad mates and other non-playable characters (NPCs) as hosts, therefore embedding the same sense of paranoia from the source film into the gameplay. Blake discovers that scientists under Commander Whitley's instruction have been researching the virus with a view to weaponise the effects of infection. Blake must confront Commander Whitley to stop the spread of the threat.

Case Study Introduction

John Carpenter's 1982 version of *The Thing* is now regarded as a modern classic of the horror genre. Film critic Anne Billson (1997) asserts that this film is "a landmark that has yet to be surpassed, not just in its special effects, but in its unique blend of irreverent humour, uncompromising bleakness and visceral impact" (p. 91). *The Thing* (2002) was released twenty years after the 1982 film, making it a non-simultaneous release licensed game. The scenario of the game adaptation made many years following the film is similar to the film-to-game adaptation of *Blade Runner*, and the 1982 source film[126] is also an example of a cult film that garnered an initially poor critical reaction, a view which shifted over time as the film eventually grew to be an admired and respected work.

A considerable amount of critical writing exists on this case study which is summarised as follows. *The Thing* (2002) represents an example of what Russell (2012) refers to as a trend in "retro-licensed" titles in the early to mid 2000s (p. 210). Hall (2011) discusses the game in a group of three significant film-to-game adaptations released from the late 1990s to the early 2000s during the period of the 4th and 5th console generation. He uses

[126] Which, as history would have it, was released on the same day as *The Thing* in the US.

The Thing (2002) to explore the idea of a game acting as a sequel to a source film. Crogan (2004) investigates the game via the lens of early debates surrounding the intersection of ludological and narratological considerations. In their discussion of film adaptation, Carr et al. (2006) engages in the most sustained discussion of the game "examined from the perspective of game development and design, rather than the player" (p. 149), thus incorporating a developer's account rather than only offering an analysis of the text itself.

Textual Analysis

> "[the game] effectively captures the sense of paranoia, horror, and confusion that pervades the film." (Gray, 2010, p. 189)

Narrative Form

Following an initial cut-scene of a Thing-creature attack on a pair of Norwegian scientists as viewed via surveillance camera, a secondary cut-scene takes place introducing the player-character JF Blake, and his team tasked with investigating the remains of the Antarctic US base which featured as the setting for the 1982 film. As the title of the game is identical to that of the 1982 film, it may call forth the assumption that the game uses Reflection Model adaptation, though the game is clearly positioned internarratively as a sequel to the source film, seeing as the events of the game begin three months after the conclusion of Carpenter's film. There are many narrative braids linking the source film and the game: JF Blake, audio tape recordings, and the discovery of story events unresolved in the source film. JF Blake is a clear substitute for RJ MacReady, the protagonist of Carpenter's film. In *The Thing* (1982), Kurt Russell channeled a hardened John Wayne or Clint Eastwood terse Western hero-archetype[127] in his portrayal of the protagonist, and the character of Blake assumes the attitude and speech cadence born of Russell's performance. Blake discovers audio tape recordings

[127] Both *The Thing* and Russell's performance of MacReady is refracted in a hall of mirrors of intextuality that includes Howard Hawks's *Rio Bravo* (1959) as well as Carpenter's own *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976) feeding back into Quentin Tarantino's *The Hateful Eight* (2015). See Nayman (n.d.).

by RJ MacReady which provide information about the events that lead to the destruction of the American base. Perhaps the most significant narrative braid is early in the game when Childs's body is found in the remains of the US base, suggesting that he perished in the sub-zero temperatures, and thus confirming the fate of one of the two survivors of the film.

The game's structure is mission-based. Each mission usually revolves around a particular survival task such as searching for an emergency radio or securing an area from Thing-creatures. The game intersperses gameplay with cut-scenes throughout, evincing a traditional action-adventure game paradigm that accords with the source film's highly economical filmmaking style which evokes Classic Hollywood Cinema (see Bordwell et al., 1985). The game also employs embedded narrative devices, whereby the player may access computer terminals to provide research updates on experiments with the virus. The interactivity with said virus has little to no bearing on gameplay outcomes, but the virus itself works as the central plot device of the game: the player discovers that US commander Colonel Whitley plans to use the virus for "global infection." The conclusion of the game occurs when Whitley transforms into a multistorey Thing-creature and Blake must defeat it by shooting it from MacReady's helicopter. It is here that JF Blake meets his doppleganger RJ MacReady. Hall (2011) discusses the endings to the various versions of the primary novella, *Who Goes There?* from which *The Thing* is adapted, indicating the multifaceted approach to the narrative's resolution. In relation to the game adaptation, he proffers that we do not know if this is the real MacReady or a Thing-version of him (p. 145).

Whilst a number of academic commentators make note of the game's fidelity to the source film,[128] some argue that the game elides important thematic content. Crogan (2004) considers the game in relation to the opposition between the ludological and the narratological in games. He argues that that film's socio-political themes, namely the Cold War, are rendered to a point of "relative insignificance" (p. 15) in the game adaptation due to the change in time from 1982 to 2002, and the cult appeal of the film, which Crogan attributes to the foregrounding of special effects. Crogan (2004) notes that the game, "capitalises on the spectacle-driven essence of Carpenter's film rather

[128] Carr et al. (2006) notes that "the developers of the computer game were faithful to the 1980s film" (p. 153).

than the narrative elements, themselves supplementary to the film's 'real work' of special effects display" (p. 15). While it may be fair to say that the direct political themes may not resonate as they did at the time of Carpenter's release, it is not to say that the psychological themes aren't manifestly incorporated into the game at the level of both narrative and mechanics.

Billson's (1997) BFI monograph attempts to reclaim *The Thing* as a modern classic (the series subtitle) by repositioning it in light of contemporary horror criticism. For Billson, Carpenter's film represents:

> A mighty convergence of all of the horror and science fiction trends of several decades. Paranoia, body horror, group politics and vital questions of human identity are spliced into a single throbbing entity which—as benefits a film about an amorphous alien being—throws out all sorts of disturbing tentacles and wormy entrails as it slithers on its inexorable way along its doom-laden storyline. (p. 13)

In a similar vein to Billson's critique, Carr et al. (2006) link videogames' capacity for repetition with the horror genre's compulsive nature:

> The things in the game are an array of variations on a theme. Toothy, tentacle, bi-pedal or quadruped, the monsters spawn in dark corners and wait behind doors; they burst out of live teammates, or bubble out of corpses. They are a host, to be repeatedly dispatched, rather than a singular enemy locked in a relationship with a hero protagonist. (p. 152)

There is a sense of psychosis to this scenario, for instance at one point a character who thinks he has been infected shoots himself in the head in front of Blake. The constant waves of Thing-creatures create an overriding sense of the danger of remaining too long in any given space. This sense of anxiety and abjection permeate moment-to-moment gameplay.

World-building

The game's world is contained in a relatively small number of spaces set in Antarctica, and as such, the harshness of the extreme weather is represented both in interiors as well as exteriors. Environments are industrial, functional spaces. Most of the early levels are one floor, connected by adjacent rooms, though some are multistorey spaces. As the game progresses, the scale and complexity of environments increases where laboratories form a substantial set of areas in the latter half of the game. Interiors range from wood paneled rooms that feature dimly-lit corners with the potential for hiding enemies, to pre-fabricated light grey living areas with dark grey stains that have the association of an Eastern European hospital. Judiciously placed blood splatters and gruesome dead bodies litter the environment.

Familiar spaces from the source film exist in the game. The game begins in a graphically simplified version of the US research station effected by the alien in the events of the film. The game also revisits the room in the Norwegian base where the remains of the block of ice that contained the original creature are encountered. Other iconic elements of source film *mise-en-scène* are also replicated, including the pool table in the recreation room.

The significance of lighting to the horror genre in film stretches back to its earliest iteration in the German Expressionist movement, where the use of harsh shadows and contrasts known as the chiaroscuro technique was central to its aesthetic identity. Just as Carpenter's *The Thing* draws from the German Expressionist heritage, so too does *The Thing* (2002): lighting is dim with chiaroscuro effects from room to room. At times, emergency lights flash on and off creating emotional instability for the player. During fire fights environments occasionally lose power, causing the lights to go out; flashes from firearms and flamethrowers then provide the only illumination. In exterior locations, light falls off drastically from light sources, creating an extremely limited field of view and necessitating the use of Blake's flashlight. In an effort to remotely search locations yet to be investigated, security camera feeds can be accessed to search various areas of the base. This security camera footage is presented in a zoom-able, extremely low-fi quality which renders the image difficult to see and increasingly blurry as the player zooms in. The muddy and unclear nature of the image taps into the fear of

the unknown. The camera allows the player to see the space, but the quality is so poor that the enemy may be there but hidden in plain sight, a horror technique that is commonly used.[129]

Thing-creatures come in various forms, from "little creatures" to "tentacles," "wall huggers," "humanoids," "walkers," and bosses[130] demonstrating the plasticity of form seen in the source film. These creatures emit both low howls and extreme high-pitched screams when encountered signaling danger for the player.

As part of their development retrospective series *Edge* magazine identifies the aesthetic and ludic strengths of the game in relation to the source film:

> The finished game is clever and compelling. The slow opening is perfectly paced to create a sense of claustrophobic dread, and even given the limitations imposed on the AI system or the scripted set-piece transformations as NPCs erupt into aliens at specific moments, the suspicion created when a new potential teammate appears is a more than ample reward. More importantly, the cabin fever of the original film is captured beautifully. While the hardware placed limitations on the degree of flesh-tearing horror Latham's [the game's director] team could create, the excellent art direction, with its eloquently suggestive tableau of hours-old bloodstains, echoes the film. ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 111)

Interactivation

A number of academic commentators on the game refer to the integration of narrative and mechanics. Carr et al. (2006) states "ludic and representational factors work in tandem. They are mutually informing" (p. 161). Weise (2009) argues that the game fulfils the conditions of his term "procedural adaptation" in that it "attempts to simulate various aspects of Carpenter's film—such as trust, social stability, and an alien that can secretly take the form of any human comrade—in its rule system" which is "entirely derived from and reinforced by the fictive context" (p. 240). The game's interactivation

[129] See for instance the use in both *The Ring* (1998-2017) and the *Paranormal Activity* (2007–2015) series. For a discussion of this aesthetic see Heller-Nicholas (2014).
[130] All of these descriptors come from the Prima Official Strategy Guide for the game (2002).

is achieved by various means: an exposure (temperature) meter gauges the player-character's exposure to the harsh Antarctic temperature, game saves are achieved by using the tape recorders placed throughout the map, and audio recorders allow you to save your game, all of which are thematically consistent with the source film.

As Carr et al. (2006) also state, the faithfulness in the adaptation to the 1982 film centres around strategic design decisions: "The developers selected a few key themes (such as inflection, isolation and trust) from the film, to develop into dynamics within their game," (p. 154). Squad-based gameplay privileges team co-ordination. Blake must rely on particular team members to fulfil various duties, such as engineers who are able to fix door controls, and medics to heal other squad members. Items such as fire extinguishers, medical kits, weapons and ammunition are consistent with the film. But it is the trust / fear meter that is the game's key interactivation mechanic, a rule system affected by the player's ongoing balancing act of establishing trust with new team members. Gameplay is reliant upon the members of the team and their relationship to the player; as they grow closer to fear on the meter, they can turn on the player and create more fear in other teammates. Thus the player must constantly look after all team members, giving them weapons, ammunition or medical supplies to keep trust levels up. A blood test may be used to demonstrate to other squad members evidence of their human status. At certain points in the game, squad members succumb to the virus, become Thing-creatures and attack the player. An NPC can transform suddenly from squad member to Thing-creature, thus mirroring the paranoia present in the source film, as one is faced with the possibility of turning to discover the alien where a teammate was a second ago. Carr et al. (2006) states: "In the film the team disintegrates as they realize that any of their number may be infected, and might no longer be human. The game developers elaborated on this mechanic" (p. 156).

In one of the seminal essays on the nature of interactivity and its effect in horror games, Krzywinska (2002) argues that in horror films, it is the audience's sensation of losing control that creates anxiety. Gray (2010) cites Krzywinska's observation on the connection between control and anxiety and summarises her comparison between film and game in relation to this phenomena:

> [Krzywinska] sees horror games as potentially better able to capture this experience than films, precisely because they can offer the illusion of control and moments of legitimate control, only to steal them away at any time, so that though "the player does have a sense of self-determination; when this is lost the sense of pre-determination is enhanced by the relative difference" (p. 189).

The Thing (2002) bears the influence of the first three entries in the survival horror series *Resident Evil* (Capcom, 1996–1999) in terms of movement and game feel. It is this oscillation of narrative surprise and suspense, as well as ludic control and loss of control that demonstrate the deep psychological power of horror in videogame form and in this particular case, of film-to-game adaptation.

Contextual Analysis

Development Account

Hall (2011) provides an overview of *The Thing*'s (2002) film-to-game adaptation:

> *The Thing* was released in 2002 as a computer game by Black Label Games under license from Universal Interactive, a division of Universal Pictures. *The Thing* mixes elements from Campbell's [author of the original short story the film is based on] story and Carpenter's film to create a "sequel" to Carpenter's film, an idea that Carpenter has continually rebuffed over the years despite the success of his film, offers from studios, and even a few prospective scripts. In deciding not to duplicate either plot, then CEO of Universal Interactive Jim Wilson, articulated the decision in these terms: "I don't want to do 'See the movie, play the game,' because we know how the movie ends... It's absolutely to build the franchises, to extend the franchises. Consumers don't want a rehash of a movie." (Hall, p. 142)

Of interest in this case study is Universal's unusual move to select a fairly experimental developer: "Computer Artworks… was intriguing but unconventional… the company founded in 1993 by pioneering digital artist William Latham started out a long way from videogames, providing unnerving computer visuals for acts like The Shamen, and

creating the immensely successful Organic Art application," ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 109). This combination of mainstream license with Latham's more independent company was a match made by publisher Universal (via its publishing label Black Label games), who demonstrated trust and respect for the developer's skills throughout the game's production: "[Universal] were very good to work with, they told us to come up with original ideas… There weren't strict guidelines, as long as we retained the quality of the original work" ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 110).

Additional to the selection of developer, was Universal's specified direction in the narrative approach to the adaptation: "Universal wanted a true sequel, with a story that took place shortly after the film's climax" ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p.110). In the process of distilling the key themes from the source film, the developers honed in to salient transferrable concepts:

> The developers viewed the Carpenter film, and identified features that could be adapted meaningfully into a game. This does not mean merely replicating imagery. It means selecting features from the film, such as infection, the setting and the extreme weather, or the attributes of the alien, and converting these elements into game mechanics. (Carr et al., 2006, p. 155)

Latham discusses the process of developing the game's narrative within the confines of the notoriously tight production timeframes:

> I'm reasonably happy with the story…One of the problems with game production is time. There are a couple of passes on the script and then: wham! You're straight into production. One of the most sensible things I did was get a very good storyboard artist, Paul Catling, to do visualizations of what the game would look like. The story then came out of a dialogue between Andrew Curtis, the design lead, and producer Chris Hadley. ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 110)

Crucial to *The Thing*'s (2002) adaptation is the entrenched sense of mistrust and suspicion progressing throughout the game from the initial cut-scene which is designed to follow on from the film's ending:

> Between them, Hadley and Curtis would settle on an ingenious solution to the problem of the film's ending, in which the last two survivors of Outpost 31 sit out a mistrustful stalemate, each suspecting the other to be an alien impostor. The first level of the game reveals a single frozen body, leaving the question of what became of the other survivor to ferment in the player's mind and urge them forwards. ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 110)

Director Latham reflects on the evolution of their trust / fear system as part of the game mechanics:

> It was early days for squad-based games, and the fear, trust and infection mechanic was quite innovative for the time… It came from very early meetings where we all watched the film to come up with brand identifiers. We decided there should be a novel AI element that mimicked what happened within the film: you never know who's going to turn. ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 110)

It is primarily this interactivation innovation that elevates the title as a remarkable entry into its genre for the time, which also works towards capturing the feel of the source film. But Latham admits there were restrictions to how much they could achieve with the trust / fear mechanic:

> Originally, the game was going to be a lot more open and dynamic: any event could happen… [but] we had to scale it back. There were a few cheats to make it entertaining. We tried to mimic human behavior, but at the end of the day it didn't matter too much how you treated your teammates. ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 110)

In spite of the compromises to the potential of the idea, Latham reflects positively on his work:

> Given what the technology allowed I'm very pleased with the game… It's one of those games that people still talk about, and other games have imitated the AI mechanisms. In the industry people are still aware of it. It is of the period, but I think it still holds its own. ("The Making of *The Thing*," 2008, p. 111)

Lead game programmer Diarmid Campbell explains the connections between infection, trust and fear:

> Adapting the standard action game rules to reflect this change [infection] was a logical step in creating the game of *The Thing*. Having a trust system as a mechanics might not seem such an obvious step. However, while in standard action games, the baddies are the baddies and the goodies are the goodies and everyone knows who is who, as soon as you introduce the idea of infection this distinction becomes much more complex and dynamic. An NPC does not know which side another character is on. While the introduction of trust as a mechanic was something *we* wanted to do anyway, I think that even if we hadn't wanted we would have had to do it in some form to allow the AI [Artificial Intelligence] to cope with the infection mechanic. (cited in Carr et al., 2006, p. 156)

Campbell goes on to discuss the player avatar relationship, particularly avatar identification through chacterisation and emotional connection:

> Characterisation in the game was important. We wanted the player to get attached to their characters and so be more disturbed when they got infected and not want to shoot them. Each character had a set of generic speech that could be triggered in certain types of situation (e.g. seeing someone burst out, getting scared, finding a friend). All generic speech was said in a manner appropriate to that character. The idea was that you could put any of the characters in any of the situations in the game and they would say things appropriate to the situation. They then also had a set of character-specific speech that would be triggered at specific points in the game to tell you something about their background and lead the story along. Then some characters would appear in cutscenes. We also tweaked some of the A.I. parameters to make some characters more likely to get scared or go mad. (cited in Carr et al., 2006, pp. 156–57)

Campbell goes on to discuss the conscious choices made with regard to player field of vision in the attempt to intensify the claustrophobic game atmosphere: "People are scared when you take away their freedom. Stopping the character being able to look you

up and down and stopping him jumping confines the player in his environment much more and intensifies the suspense" (Carr et al., 2006, p. 157).

Critical & Player Reception

Key points relating to textual factors featured in *The Thing*'s (2002) reception are excerpted from critics' (underlined) and players' (non-underlined) reviews and comments and are presented in Table 10.

The Thing (2002) holds a MobyRank of 83 (Xbox) / 77 (PS2) / 77 (PC) and a Metacritic score of 78 (Xbox) / 78 (PS2) / 77 (PC).

Game as Adaptation "Excellent movie adaptation." (Henne, 2003, n.p.) "The guys who made this game stayed true to the movie's premise to make it feel like a true sequel…would make John Carpenter proud." (Mike K, 2004, n.p.)

Storytelling "…a compelling plot and based upon action, evasion, trust and fear." (Stan, 2004, n.p.) "…the coolest aspect of the story…is that you never fully know who is friend and who is foe." (McElfish, 2002, n.p.)
Mood and Atmosphere

"game feels quite a bit like the movie…purports a creepy, hold-your-breath and crap-your-pants kind of experience." (McElfish, 2002, n.p.) "…very creepy mood." (Sycada, 2012, n.p.) "atmosphere is dense." (Henne, 2003, n.p.) "…explicit displays of blood and gore have certainly given *The Thing* the right feel / introduction sets a very creepy mood." (*The Thing Review*, n.d., n.p.)
Game Mechanics: Trust / Fear meter "…need to constantly check the trust and fear levels of your team." (McElfish, 2002, n.p.) "The game brings fear and suspense to unimaginable levels." (Stan, 2004, n.p.) "AI is impressive with the Trust / Fear interface." (Mike K, 2004, n.p.) "*The Thing* is a terrifying battle to the finish…A unique 'trust meter' makes establishing relationships key to survival, since anyone, including you, could be a monster." (Steinberg, 2002, n.p.) "…added to the fresh ideas mix is a rather innovative trust system." (*The Thing Review*, n.d., n.p.) "…unique gameplay elements." (Stan, 2004, n.p.)
Sound / Music "…features the same creepy music from the original film, which really helps set the mood." (MacDonald, 2002, n.p.)

"…music in the game is reminiscent of the film and actually features a few orchestrations that were used in the film. The soundtrack is comprised of slow, creepy tracks that successfully adds to the overall appreciation of the game." (McElfish, 2002, n.p.)
Sound / Voice acting "Voice over work is extensive and very believable." (MacDonald, 2002, n.p.) "The voice-actors' performances are first-rate and gives each character incredibly believable personality." (McElfish, 2002, n.p.)
Critical Praise "…survival horror fans will more than likely find that *The Thing* is one of the best such games for the Xbox." (MacDonald, 2002, n.p.) "*The Thing* is one of the best film to game licenses to come along in quite a while." (Sycada, 2012, n.p.)

Table 10. The Thing (2002) Critical and Player Reception

Critics and players collectively express the game's fidelity to the 1980s source film. Reasons for this attitude are a combination of aesthetic, ludological and thematic factors. Aesthetically, commentators note the "creepy mood," the explicit levels of abjection that represent the key themes of anxiety and trust, and the power of the original score which is carried over from the film. Ludologically, both critics and players overwhelmingly highlight the trust / fear mechanic and the innovative nature of its integration into the story of the game. This same feature of the game can also be seen to powerfully interpolate the major theme from the source film which is paranoia and anxiety. A theme running throughout the reception data is that of the game's ability to

instill a high degree of immersion in the player via voice acting, believable characterisation, and storytelling. It is suggested by commentators that it had been many years since a quality movie-licensed game has been released. Indeed, this study would point to the 1997 releases of *GoldenEye 007* and *Blade Runner*.

Paratextual Analysis

Adaptation System

The Thing (2002) operates within the Adaptation System category B1. The hypotext film, *The Thing* (1982) is a remake of a 1951 film directed by Howard Hawks,[131] which in turn was an adaptation of a 1938 novella titled *Who Goes There?* by John Campbell Jr. The videogame positions itself as a direct sequel to the 1982 film but bears the DNA of Hawks's original via Carpenter's devotion to the filmmaker he considers to be one of the great masters of American cinema (Conrich & Woods, 2005, p. 4).

[131] This is speculation as Hawks's editor Christian Nyby is credited as director although most film scholars consider it to be a Hawks film. See for instance Robin Wood's classic auteurist 1968 book-length study of Hawks.

Transmedia State

Few entries exist in *The Thing* franchise although there have been numerous attempts to revive the property over the last twenty years.

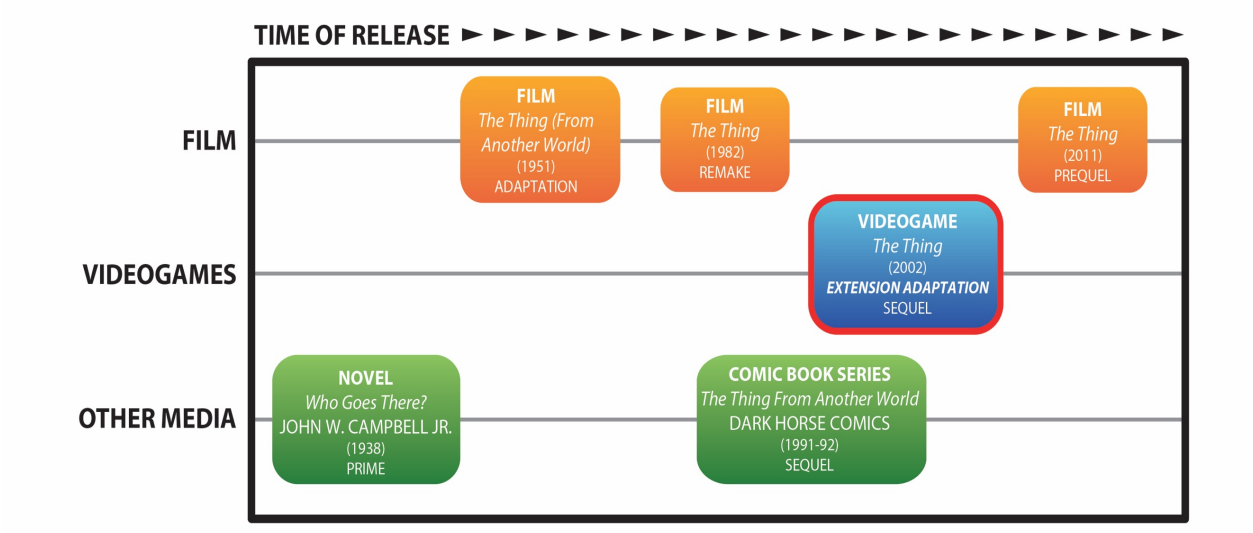

Figure 26. The Thing (2002) Transmedia State

Nine years after the videogame adaptation and almost twenty years after the Carpenter remake came another feature film entry, perhaps confusingly also entitled *The Thing*—thus not recognising any differentiation between these two (as did the videogame) in the franchise. The 2011 film is a curious case of adaptation in that it acts as both a remake and a prequel since it features events that directly echo those of the Carpenter remake,[132] but is set prior to the events of the 1982 film, setting up the events of Carpenter's film.[133] The film may also be considered a failed reboot, as at the time of the 2011 film production, it was intended to function as a platform for the revivification of the property, however due to the poor critical reception[134] and disappointing box office (not even returning its production cost), Universal decided not to go ahead with any new instalments. The intended reboot of *The Thing* occurred at a time when other legacy genre properties of a similar vintage such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (rebooted in 2003) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (rebooted in 2010) had achieved

[132] As with Carpenter's version of Hawks's film, the 2011 film may be seen as a type of homage to Carpenter's film. See Leitch (1990).
[133] Where Carpenter's film was contemporaneous, the 2011 film is a period piece set in 1982.
[134] It should be noted that Carpenter's film was also generally poorly reviewed at the time of original release. See Billson (1997).

significant success in the marketplace. The commercial failure of the 2011 film signaled a general lack of brand recognition of *The Thing* property, and ultimately rendered it unable to join the trend in modern classic horror franchise reboots.

Case Study: *The Warriors* (Rockstar, 2005)

Extension Model adaptation of *The Warriors* (1979)

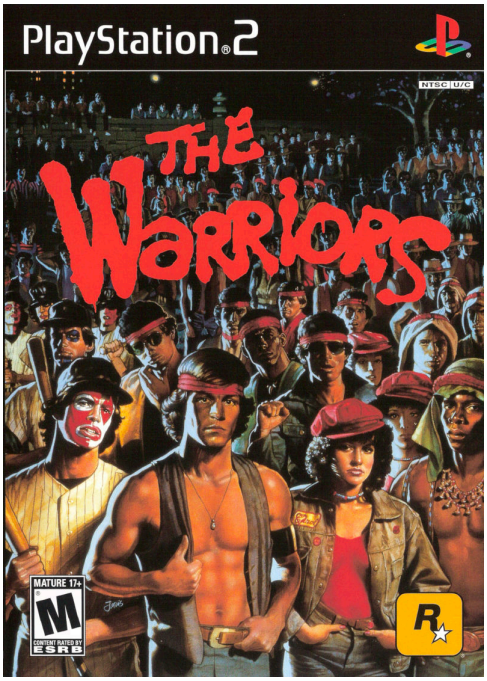

Figure 27. Box Cover Art for *The Warriors* (2005)

Textual Synopsis

The Warriors (Hill, 1979) is an American post-Watergate cult film dealing with themes of race, survival of the fittest, and existential crises. This film is set in an underground New York world of street gangs, in an undetermined time. At the beginning of the film, charismatic leader, Cyrus, attempts to unite all the tribes but is assassinated and the Warriors gang is blamed, initiating their journey from the Bronx to Brooklyn where they must fight tooth and nail for every New York block they travel. Gangs are fueled by their fists and any weapon they can put their hands on in an animalistic portrayal of endless fighting and punk culture, which is pervaded by a heavy sense of nihilism. The film "has the swagger of a blaxploitation film, and the frontier motif of a Western. It is

equally a city symphony, or, better, a subway symphony…" (Mathijs & Mendik, 2011, p. 223).

Rockstar Games's action beat-'em-up videogame adaptation *The Warriors* (2005)[135] focuses on the characters from the film and details their initiations into the gang. The game portrays the development of camaraderie within the gang through a series of missions centred on gang turf warfare and the struggle for power and territory. The later part of the game reflects the events of the film as the Warriors move from one end of New York City to the other. The game deals with loyalty, brotherhood, and internecine conflict, and sheds more light on relationships than is seen in the film.

Case Study Introduction

Released in late 2005, *The Warriors* game adaptation marks the only Rockstar game that is not based on original IP, and follows the release of two controversial games developed and published by Rockstar Games—the stealth horror game *Manhunt* (2003) and the fifth main instalment of the *Grand Theft Auto*[136] series, *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* (2004).[137] Also at this time, Russell (2012) refers to a trend in "retro-licensed" titles in the early to mid 2000s along with *The Godfather* (2006). The source film is cited as Rockstar Games co-founder and president Sam Houser's favourite childhood film (Kushner, 2012, p. 216), and with this in mind, it can be seen that many aspects of *The Warriors*—philosophical, tonal, aesthetic—are at the heart of Rockstar's design philosophy which can be seen across multiple titles including *Red Dead Redemption* (2010) and the *GTA* series. Thus, is can be posited that the film may be a kind of touchstone to the company. In a similar way to Brookey's (2010) argument that Francis Ford Coppola's authorship is supplanted in the game adaptation of *The Godfather*, *The Warriors* demonstrates Rockstar Games's authorship of a property that is not originally

[135] Due to the identical film and game titles, the game adaptation will be distinguished as *The Warriors* (2005).
[136] Hereafter referred to as *GTA*.
[137] *The Warriors* (2005) was developed by Rockstar Toronto during the same time *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* was in late stages of completion at Rockstar North, with *The Warriors* releasing almost exactly one year after *San Andreas*.

created by Rockstar. The case of *The Warriors* demonstrates the interrelationship between a work that inspired the authorial signature of a game studio, and the subsequent application of said authorial signature via an adaptation of it; so much of the tone and feel of *The Warriors* permeates the Rockstar Games signature.

Although *The Warriors* has cult film (Mathijs & Sexton, 2011) status, due to the age and cultural visibility of the source film[138] relatively few players of the game adaptation may have seen it. For this reason, Rockstar's decision to incorporate both prequel and mirrorquel elements, appeals to both audiences familiar and unfamiliar with the property. This transmedial growth approach to adaptation marks *The Warriors* (2005) as distinct from other Extension Model case studies.

Textual Analysis

Narrative Form

The game employs both Reflection and Extension Model adaptation by providing a prequel bridge to the events of the source film which are then represented in the game. The key opening scene from the film, in which Cyrus is murdered, is also the opening of the game, and is rendered as an animated cut-scene, replicating the style of the source film.[139] This opening transitions into a flashback three months prior to the events of the film where the player takes control of various Warriors gang members, including leader, Cleon (who is killed in the opening scene of the film). Approximately two thirds of the way through the game (Mission 14 "Desperate Dudes"), the plot chronology catches up with the film's opening scene. From here, the prequel component of the game is completed and subsequent sequences from the film are played out in a Reflection adaptation manner; missions become somewhat shorter to those earlier in the game, so that a majority of the game is concerned with the prequel events. The events of the source film take place over the course of one night, and by virtue of the flashback

[138] An entry on *The Warriors* appears in the first volume of Danny Peary's foundational book of essays on cult cinema, *Cult Movies* (1981).

[139] The presence of the comic book stylisation of The Director's Cut version of the source film flows over into the game with transitional moments drawing on this style.

technique, this restricted plot time of the film is expanded into a more appropriate play-time for the game adaptation.

Certain alterations exist in the adaptation, for instance, the game omits the film's romance subplot between Swan and Mercy, and in terms of tone, the game's melodramatic theatricality exceeds the source film. As a mark of Rockstar's irony, at particular moments enemies can be heard using the taunt "This ain't no movie, Warriors!" Significantly, the final battle with Luther in Mission 19 "Come Out to Play" ends with Luther being stabbed in the wrist as in the source film, leaving the fate of the antagonist open-ended. During the end credits of the game, the player can take control of a rival gang and beat Luther and his Rogue gang.

Additional "flashback" bonus missions allow the player to experience moments in the backstories of gang members. These moments act as origin stories, occurring even further in the fictional past than seen in the main game. This extends the game's fictional prequel timeline to over a year prior to the events of the source film. It can be argued that the game has a more developed sense of narrative than the film in terms of character depth and interaction, since the additional flashback missions provide greater understanding of character motivations (Carbone, 2005). This is a clear example of transmedial growth, as playing the game affords the player far greater insight into the motivations of the characters from the film. Compared with this deeper level of character understanding, the film counterparts are somewhat empty vessels with one goal only: to ruthlessly fight their way back home.

World-building

The game employs the same musical choices from the soundtrack of the film, and uses an effect of Greek chorus-like announcements that play diegetically on radios in-game, a technique which is a *GTA* signature trait. The game definitively locates itself in the alternate 1979 universe of a dystopian New York City,[140] where all of the action takes place under the cover of night. [141]

[140] The environments also evoke the production design from another genre film of the period, that being John Carpenter's *Escape from New York* (1981).
[141] The exception to this is the final battle with Luther on the beach (to correspond with the source film).

The Warriors (2005) is a game with a punk aesthetic. Perhaps it may be even considered a punk game.[142] The relatively restrained level of explicit violence of the film is amplified to extreme levels in the game.[143] Anable (2013) argues that the film and game versions of *The Warriors* depict urban disorder in ways that comment on the political and social nature of urban violence:

> *The Warriors* is a spatial story. Its narrative is organized according to the characters' trajectories across New York City. *The Warriors* is also a story about two different fantasies of urban crisis. In the late 1970s, the film recast urban crisis as a problem to be solved through collective action from below to restore social justice. In the early twenty-first century, the video game recast urban crisis as a nostalgic representation of disorder in an overly sanitized urban and media landscape. Rather than thinking about the film and the video game as discrete objects, we can hold them together to see the long unfolding of a transmedia narrative. (Section 5, para. 1)

Anable's argument draws together strands of this thesis that explore the nature of videogames as entries in a media franchise operating beyond strictly textual boundaries where paratextual resonances oscillate between series entries.

Interactivation

The choice of the brawler / beat-'em-up game genre for adaptation is the most significant interactivation decision in creating *The Warriors*. The balanced and feature-rich fighting rule-set affords each Warriors gang member and rival gang their own fighting style. This style of partial open-world fighting action was well-known to Rockstar Games by the time they began work on *The Warriors*, and provides a range of actions consistent with the source film. Activities such as mugging people on the street, performing smash and grabs, lock picking, stealing car radios, and painting graffiti to "snuff" a rival gang's logo, all interactivate the events contained in the source film. The presence of "Flash" (a drug akin to cocaine) used to boost your health at key points

[142] See the discussion of the game's nihilistic attitude below.
[143] The game's level of coarse language mirrors that of the film however.

prior to or during combat,[144] is a game mechanic addition that still feels harmonious with the source film even though it does not exist in the hypotext. The use of diegetic elements in the gang's hangout apply congruous internal logic, such as the TV to check game progress and statistics, the ability to replay levels by accessing the subway map on the wall, and the pinball machine to access "rumble mode."[145]

Edge magazine's critique of *The Warriors* emphasises the nihilistic ethos that pervades the game:

> The gangs you brawl with, often seen beating women and taking drugs, are little better than you. The game design's emphasis on never having any real control over yourselves or territory emphasises the greater point that you simply enjoy the action. Cyrus's dream of a unified organisation was never going to work in the first place because the gangs, along with the player, don't care. ("Time Extend—The Warriors," 2005, n.p.)

Central reasons for this nihilistic tendency are design decisions executed to rob the player of any significant agency outside of their narrow programming. This is in stark contrast to Rockstar's *GTA* franchise in which the game design opens each of the game worlds to the player-character, allowing a far greater sense of agency than in *The Warriors*'s programmatic, stage by stage trek through the streets of New York.

[144] That this game mechanic, explicitly outlawed by censorship authorities, escaped the Office of Film and Literature Classification in Australia is surprising.
[145] A gang-fight arena mode.

Figure 28. The Warriors (2005) gang members

Contextual Analysis

Development Account

Rockstar Games co-founders, Sam Houser and his brother Dan Houser, are notorious for taking a strict stance against revealing interviews discussing their creative process, and even interviews in general: "Sam Houser is the mind behind Rockstar and the success of *Grand Theft Auto*, but he rarely speaks publicly" (Hilliard, 2013, n.p.); "Houser says no to a lot of things: to being photographed, to participating in the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo game convention that takes place every summer in Los Angeles ('It's like a big, sort of willy-waving exercise') and to interviews" (Goldberg, 2013, n.p.). Thus the process of searching for development accounts of *The Warriors* resulted in very few substantial records. David Kushner's book *Jacked: The Story of Grand Theft Auto* (2012) makes only one mention of the significance of the source film:

> A subway car slowly snaked into the station near where a gang had gathered. It looked just like the opening scene from *The Warriors*, but not exactly. It was a lovingly rendered, shot-for-shot recreation created by Rockstar for a video game version of Sam's favorite childhood film. (p. 226)

Another source on the development of the game, Schiesel's *New York Times* article, "Gangs of New York" (2005), is worth excerpting substantially as it is the only source to dedicate a lengthy consideration to the creation of the game. This source also points out the nostalgic significance of the source film to the Houser brothers:

> For the Housers, that fascination with America began at a videotape library in their childhood neighborhood. "There were other things that we would watch once or so, but we kept sort of going back to *The Warriors* and watching it sort of obsessively," [Dan] Houser recalled. (Schiesel, 2005, n.p.)

Over time, the brothers saw the synergy between the film and its potential adapted game form. Schiesel quotes Dan Houser again:

> When you watch it as a 7-year-old kid, it seems super-weird and terrifying… When you watch today, it's over the top. It's sort of surreal in most of the points. But the structure and the style translate perfectly into a video game world. The structure of the journey—encountering people and defeating them on the route—was a fighting game in a movie format before it was ever a video game. (Schiesel, 2005, n.p.)

The only actual information on the technical development process of the game is that it took four years to make the game with a small team of 50 people at Rockstar Games Toronto Studio (Schiesel, 2005, n.p.). The title's producer Jeronimo Barrera (2007) discusses the focus on achieving a high sense of authenticity with the world:

> It is an historical license… [with a] huge cult following… We went crazy to make sure we were accurate, everything's in there for people who are familiar with the film…We went to great lengths to make sure we captured the look and vibe of late 70s New York. One of the ways we did it was with a lot of research. We made sure we worked with Astroland, and the people with Wonder Wheel, to capture Coney. ("Jeronimo Barrera Interview—*The Warriors*," 2007, n.p.)

Dan Houser elucidates his philosophy of film-to-game adaptation, which in this case, translated into the dynamics of the beat-'em-up genre:

> In a lot of films you look at the way the narrative is designed, and the way the focus is so heavily on characters or the period means they wouldn't translate into good video games… Maybe in 20 years time you can make a game that's more sophisticated at a character level, but we're still at a point in the evolution of games that physical actions are more effective to convey than emotions or conversations. (cited in Schiesel, 2005, n.p.)

Over time, Rockstar Games has greatly refined this notion of sophisticated character portrayals in videogames. Considering *GTA V* and *Red Dead Redemption*, it can be seen that dialogue and characterisation in Rockstar releases has developed greatly, but there still exists a strong reliance on character based action as a means of expressing narrative.

Critical and Player Reception Table

Key points relating to textual factors featured in *The Warriors*'s (2005) reception are excerpted from critics' (underlined) and players' (non-underlined) reviews and comments and are presented in Table 11.

The Warriors (2005) holds a MobyRank of 82 (Xbox) / 84 (PS2) and a Metacritic score of 84 (PS2).

Game as Adaptation

"Although the majority of movie based games fail to offer immersive gameplay beyond the subject matter they're based on, *The Warriors* is a completely new experience. It tells a story that new and old fans will enjoy, and features combat challenging enough to make it one of the best adaptations to date." (*The Warriors Review*, n.d., n.p.)

"It might just be the best game adaptation of a film ever, in terms of capturing the mood of the original movie." (*The Warriors Review*, n.d., n.p.)

"What *The Warriors* ultimately does best is tie together film and game…[it] clearly goes out of its way to do more than just rehash a previously told story, as many games based on films tend to do. Again, though, this is not a game in which you have to have seen the original movie to understand and enjoy it; but if anything, it'll make you want to go out of your way to see the movie, just to see how it plays out and compares to the game experience. And in the end, isn't that what all games based on movies try to do in the first place?" (Navarro, 2005, n.p.)

"Comprising nonstop action, only the lightest hints of character and plot, and a storyline that followed the broad outlines of the epic journey, the movie was essentially a video game in its own right. Given that, it's surprising how much the video game version of *The Warriors* brings to the table." (Mott, 2010, p. 644)

"One of the best brawlers of any generation, based on one of my favorite 70s flicks. A landmark in licensed gaming." (MichaelS, 2008, n.p.)

"The film is my favourite movie of all time and now the game is my favourite on the ps2." (JohnnyV, 2005, n.p.)

Storytelling

"The story does more than repeat the events from the film, it recreates a chaotic world of urban street justice. The prequel missions reveal a complex backstory and build the tension between the rival gangs." (*The Warriors Review*, n.d., n.p.)

"The film didn't spend much time with things like backstory and narrative beyond the gang's flee from the meeting and subsequent danger-filled trek back to their home turf on Coney Island. But the game goes back and gives these characters, as well as the many other assorted gangs that occupy New York, some context." (Navarro, 2005, n.p.)

"*The Warriors* is a more linear game than Rockstar is known for…with a storyline that actually expands the film, you don't have to be a fan of the movie to like it." (Mott, 2010, p. 644)

Performance

"Many of the original actors from the film have returned to voice their characters—at least, most of the ones that are still alive. Guys like Michael Beck, James Remar, and Dorsey Wright once again turn in excellent performances (despite sounding quite a bit older than the 20-something characters they play)." (Navarro, 2005, n.p.)

"The dialogue—Very harsh, loads of profanity, but didn't feel forced or contrived, like some games." (Sven Dee, 2007, n.p.)

Game Genre / Mechanics

"While the game doesn't deliver the same massive free-roaming environment as *Grand Theft Auto*, it does have lots of wide-open areas for lots of long-distance running and massive gang fights…It's when the game is at its most GTA-like that it comes alive, conjuring up scenarios that take in whole city boroughs and throwing at you groups of adversaries and challenges you have to juggle on the fly." (*The Warriors Review*, n.d., n.p.)

"*The Warriors* works because it simply gets the concept of massive gang battles *right*…It doesn't really matter if you're familiar with the film it's based on; *The Warriors* delivers as a completely stand-alone work, and any fan of beat-'em-up games is certain to enjoy it on some level. But if you have seen the film, all the better…With its unrelenting obsession with nailing the details of the film's universe, its quality action, and its breadth of content, *The Warriors* is easily one of the better pure-action games to come out this year." (Navarro, 2005, n.p.)

"This game represents the ultimate brawler for the PS2. I've never seen the film, but

will go out and rent it today." (PaulA., 2005, n.p.)
World-building "To translate *The Warriors* into a playable 3D environment, Rockstar had to rebuild the vintage streets and back alleys of New York." (*The Warriors Review*, n.d., n.p.) "What's impressive about this is that it actually feels like you're getting to know more about these characters, rather than just running through some tacked-on motions to stretch a two-hour movie into a 12-hour game." (Navarro, 2005, n.p.)
Extension Strategy "The game begins with a rendering of the movie's opening sequence…the cutscene fades out and the game begins three months earlier. The question posed here is one of the unanswered themes of the film: what went wrong?" (*Edge Time Extend Feature: The Warriors*, 2005, n.p.)
Mood / Feel "Barry De Vorzon's original score is fully intact here, as are many of the licensed tracks from the original soundtrack, including songs from artists like Joe Walsh, Fear, and Arnold McCuller. All the songs are most definitely of the '70s, helping to give the game that pulpy, retro vibe that it so clearly seeks." (Navarro, 2005, n.p.) "Captured the atmosphere of the original film perfectly. The look- captured the dark, dirty vibe of 70's NYC." (Sven Dee, 2007, n.p.)

Table 11. The Warriors (2005) Critical and Player Reception Table

Both critics and players praised the efforts of Rockstar Games in creating a movie-licensed game of this quality. The reputation of Rockstar as set by their previous work, especially their *GTA* series, was both mentioned explicitly and inferred in responses to *The Warriors*. Many commentators remarked on the game's thoughtful approach to Extension Model adaptation, especially the interlacing of missions that act as prequel material, with the replaying of the events of the source film. Particular mention was made of the fleshing out of the characters' backstories and relationships, the writing and performance of character dialogue, the balance, subtlety and variation of the fighting game mechanics, the game feel, and the deployment of licensed music, one of Rockstar's signature aesthetic qualities.

Paratextual Analysis

Adaptation System

The Warriors videogame is identified as category B in the Adaptation System, comprising the 1965 Sol Yurick novel prime text and the subsequent Walter Hill film adaptation in 1979. By all accounts, the film adaptation distils the key characters, events and a number of the themes of Sol Yurick's novel, which itself is a loose retelling of the Ancient Greek epic story *Anabasis* by Xenophon.[146] One gang that appears in the game but does not appear in the film, The Destroyers, bear similarity to The Lords, rivals of the main gang in Sol Yurick's novel, such that the game goes beyond the source film and borrows from the prime novel.

Transmedia State

Aside from the 2005 videogame,[147] there are no other significant internarrative entries in this property.[148] Rockstar took great care with the property in their creation of the game (especially the assembling of the film's actors to provide voice performance for their corresponding characters), and this close attention, as well as its critical reputation

[146] The character of Cyrus is a direct reference to the Greek commander in the original story.
[147] Another videogame titled *The Warriors: Street Brawl* (Paramount Digital Entertainment, 2009), seemingly an extrapolation adaptation, elides narrative material.
[148] Aside from comics featuring The Warriors not researched as part of this thesis.

and commercial success, suggest that the internarrative events contained in the game hold a type of canonical status in the fan community.[149] As an extension of the cult status of the 1979 film, fan-made films recreating scenes from the film using Rockstar's *GTA V*[150] show the devotion and invention of fans of *The Warriors*.

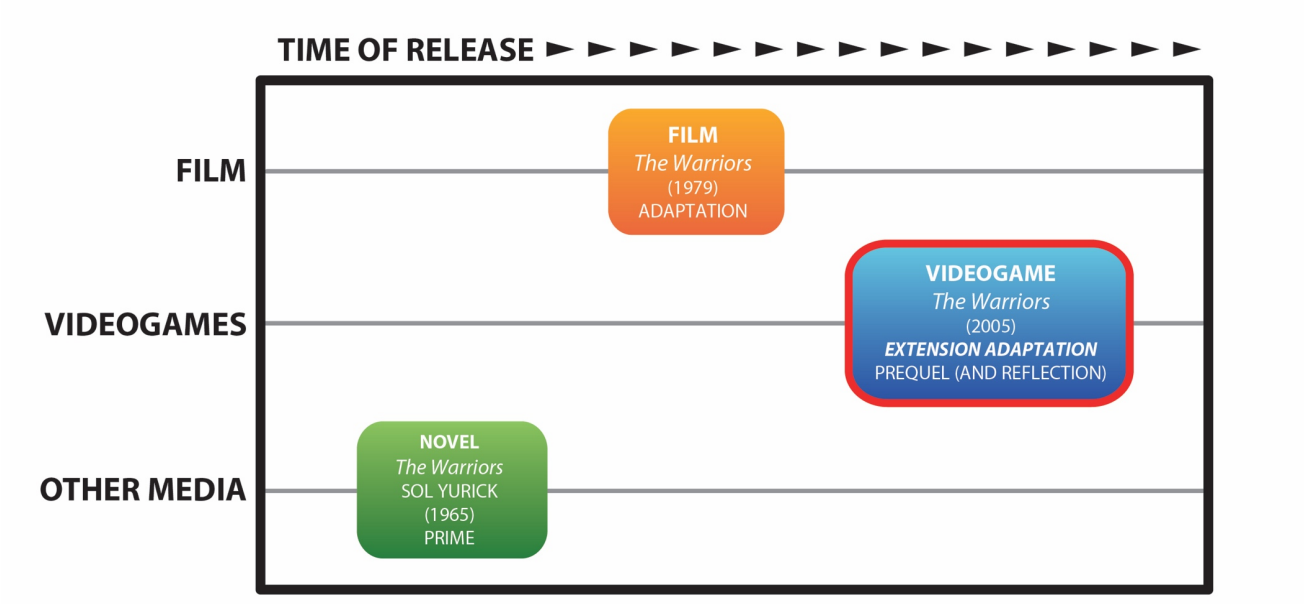

Figure 29. The Warriors (2005) Transmedia State

Walter Hill, the director of *The Warriors* (1979), acquired a reputation of a "metteur-en-scène"[151] over a long career in American cinema working on a plethora of genre films, particularly Westerns, and it could be argued that Rockstar absorbed Hill's approach. Rockstar Games have built their 'house-style' from co-opting American film genres and creating videogame adaptations of those genres: The *Grand Theft Auto* series (1999–2013) references the gangster genre, the *Manhunt* series (2003–2007) draws upon psychological horror / snuff film, the *Red Dead* series (2004–present),[152] the western, and *L.A. Noire* (2011) recruits the conventions of film noir, or more correctly, the police

[149] See *The Warriors* fan wiki (n.a., n.d.).
[150] This can be viewed on the Rockstargames.com website ("GTA Online Player-Created Throwback Jobs: The Warriors Anniversary Special," 2015).
[151] The term refers to "a professional craftsperson" according to Bazin (2006).
[152] Buel (2013) provides an analysis of how games have dealt with the Hollywood Western with a focus on *Red Dead Redemption*.

procedural. [153] Rockstar's own official website features many thoughtful recommendations [154] of works from throughout film history, demonstrating the company's considerable connection to cinema.

One critic points out *The Warriors*'s (1979) deep running intertextual influence on videogames, citing Sega's futuristic rollerblading / tagging game *Jet Set Radio* (2000) for the Dreamcast as a key reference:

> But then I realised that the influence of the film ran much deeper than that. *Jet Set Radio* was merely a platforming version for all those great late 80s / early 90s side scrolling fighters. They too share all of *The Warriors*' essential ingredients. *Streets of Rage*, *Final Fight*, and *Double Dragon* all lean heavily on their cinematic inspiration. (GameCentral, 2014, n.p.)

As mentioned in the introduction to this case study, *The Warriors* can be viewed as a creative touchstone for Rockstar Games through the Houser brothers, one which continues today, 12 years after their adaptation. When playing *The Warriors* (2005) and considering what it does and how it does it, the game seems at the heart of the company's design philosophy. The anarchic sensibility present in this property is best exemplified by Rockstar's signature *GTA* series, which has long been associated with the playful pleasure of violent excess and arguments surrounding potential dangers of videogame violence.

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[153] See for instance Dana Polan's interview on the Criterion Collection edition of *The Naked City* (Dassin, 1948).
[154] See the "Rockstar Recommends" pages on Rockstargames.com (n.a., n.d.)

Case Study: *Alien: Isolation* (Sega, 2014)

Extension Model adaptation of the *Alien* series (1979–present)

Figure 30. Box Cover Art for *Alien: Isolation*

Textual Synopsis

The *Alien* franchise is a science fiction horror series dealing with the terrifying, aggressive Xenomorph hidden in deep space that attacks any human envoy it encounters in the effort to breed and keep its species alive. Unfortunately, it must use humans as hosts for this reproductive purpose, which results in horrific bodily trauma, followed by death. Main character Ellen Ripley is the hero of the series and embodies the idea of "the final girl" (Clover, 1992), as well as a notion of feminism and the primordial mother. The series foregrounds the power of corporatisation via the figure of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation: a company traversing and terraforming the galaxy. The corporation's work, however, serves to conceal an ulterior mission—capturing the Xenomorph. In a parallel effort, this elusive beast also seeks to colonise the galaxy, and

thus the series delves into questions about the nature of humanity and species supremacy.

In the survival horror game *Alien: Isolation*, Ripley's daughter, Amanda, sets out on a solo mission 15 years after the events of *Alien*, to find her mother who has gone missing after her initial encounter with the Xenomorph. Unbeknownst to Amanda, her mother is in cryostasis, and whilst she does not succeed in her search for Ripley, she encounters the alien.

Case Study Introduction

The most recent game considered in this study is Creative Assembly's survival sci-fi / horror title *Alien: Isolation*,[155] a movie-licensed game one critic has called "one of the most faithful film adaptations ever made" (Kelly, 2017). Arriving soon after the scorched earth of *Aliens: Colonial Marines* (Sega, 2013),[156] *A:I* revisits the *Alien* franchise in a very different way. Where *Colonial Marines* employed the action aesthetics of Cameron's *Aliens* (1986), *A:I* operates squarely in the realm of suspense—in game genre terms this equates to survival horror. With the deeply embedded sentiment of movie-licensed games as bad objects firmly ensconced in the gaming public's mind, *A:I* reassessed this supposition. This is due not only to the significance of the franchise and the visibility of the game leading up to release (featuring players being shown playing the game and their extreme affective reactions[157]) but also the release proximity and distinct lack of quality of *Colonial Marines*.[158]

The game manages to capture Roger Luckhurst's (2014) assessment of the source film: "*Alien* is an education in situating humans within a spectrum of other types of being, a harsh lesson in human dethronement" (p. 66). As Keogh (2014b) argues, "It is one of those rare, beautiful triple-a games that is dedicated to ensuring the player is not the

[155] Hereafter shortened to *A:I*
[156] See Schreier (2013).
[157] See IGN (2014) for instance.
[158] See Cork (2013) for a representative review of the game.

centre of the world, that they are not powerful, that they are not in charge" (n.p.). The realisation that the game communicates to the player is clear—unlike a majority of first-person action games, firepower will not lead to a successful outcome. Indeed, it is only by accepting the role of a far inferior adversary to the Xenomorph, that the player is able to progress.

Aside from the main game, it is worth noting the simultaneously released downloadable content mission for *A:I* titled *Crew Expendable* (2014) which takes place in an alternate version of the events of *Alien* (1979). This DLC featured heavily in the promotion of the game, as the original cast of the film was assembled to provide their voices for the characters they played 35 years earlier, including Sigourney Weaver in the central protagonist, Riley. This additional mission provides a bridge between the 1979 film and the main game, as well as further signifying the 'official' and 'authentic' status of the game.

Figure 31. Cast shot from the *Crew Expendable* DLC promotional materials

Textual Analysis

Narrative Form

A:I acts as an interquel within the fictional timeline of the *Alien* franchise as it is designed as a work that exists between the events of *Alien* (1979) and its 1986 sequel *Aliens*. As Creative Director of *A:I* Alistair Hope said: "We wanted to tell a story that

was really closely associated with that first film" (Kelly, 2017) and so by situating the events 15 years after the events of *Alien* (and 42 years prior to the events in *Aliens*), the game is able to integrate Ellen Ripley's 25 year-old daughter, Amanda, in a mission to discover information leading to the disappearance of her mother.

Figure 32. Amanda Ripley in *Alien: Isolation*

The central narrative braiding in this case study occurs in the form of the playable character of Amanda Ripley. The character of Amanda Ripley exists in the extended version of James Cameron's film: *Aliens: Special Edition* (Cameron, 1992), in the scene in which the cryosleep reawakened Ellen Ripley is told of her daughter's death.[159] The scene holds a great deal of dramatic and emotional weight, foregrounding Ripley's profound loss and how it foreshadows Ripley's relationship with her surrogate daughter Newt later in the film, as well as the series' larger concerns about motherhood in general.[160]

[159] Ripley is given a photograph of an elderly woman (Amanda) who bares a striking resemblance to actress Sigourney Weaver. The woman in the photograph is played by Sigourney Weaver's mother, actress Elizabeth Inglis.

[160] It should be noted that in perhaps the most touching moment in *A:I*, Sigourney Weaver delivers a voice performance as Ellen Ripley in the form of an audio message designed for Amanda.

Figure 33. Photograph of Amanda Ripley in *Aliens: Special Edition* (1992)

Amanda Ripley shares many characteristics with her mother—practicality, resilience, and intelligence, to name a few. The choice to employ Ellen Ripley as the central character is but one (albeit central) example of how the game employs Extension Model strategies. Keogh (2014b) articulates the nature of the game's approach to adaptation without resorting to the Reflection Model:

> *Isolation* functions as a simulator for the kind of cool moments that happen in the Alien films… *Isolation* is full of moments and tropes that evoke scenes of the films without directly repeating them… It *feels* like the movies and it also nods to them in both the emergent and authored moments. (n.p.)

Keogh's choice of the words "simulator" and "emergent" are crucial to understanding the key ways in which the game produces emotions such as fear, fright, and surprise within the survival horror aesthetics of *A:I*, whether confronting the Xenomorph or a murderous "Working Joe" android.[161]

World-building

The developers of *A:I* stayed true to a 1970s version of the future and directly replicated the lo-fi sci-fi aesthetic employed in the production design of Ridley Scott's *Alien*—as

[161] The choice of androids as a secondary nemesis in *A:I* is consistent not only with the *Alien* franchise but more generally of science fiction of the 1970s. These "Working Joe" androids have a 1970s dystopian feel. The design of these "synthetics" recall such automatons from the *Dr. Who* (1963–present) TV series, such as *Spearhead from Space* (Martinus, 1970) and *Robots of Death* (Briant, 1977), as well as the gunslinger character from *Westworld* (Crichton, 1973). The staring blankness and relentlessness of their movement strikes fear in the player.

Alistair Hope calls it "clunky, chunky technology."[162] This aesthetic extends beyond the bounds of environment design to include the incorporation of subtle aspects of its cinematographic style.

The game's designers were sensitive to the properties of film grain in the original film and so decided to replicate its tonality according to their research into the film stocks and lighting used in the production of *Alien*. Lead Artist on the game, Jude Bond, relates:

> We are aware of when it was made, so we are conscious of what lights we should be using, what the colour temperature of those lights should be. There are no LED lights in our game. We've appropriated a lot of the production methodology of the original film. ("Isolation," 2014, p. 69)

This impressive attention to textual detail was one of the most cited aspects of the game by game critics.[163] There is no other film-to-game adaptation that replicates the look and feel of the source film as solidly as *A:I*. The development team was given access to archival material "never seen outside of 20th Century Fox's vaults" ("Isolation," 2014, p. 71) to be able to create this level of world-building detail. The grounded lo-fi "everydayness" of the environments of the game reinforce the sense that sci-fi film and game tropes (such as futuristic technology or incredibly powerful weapons) are not going to provide solutions. Rather, this game is one in which Ripley's ingenuity will be the thing that saves her. [164]

Integrated into the game space are various means of environmental storytelling. Drawing on *BioShock*'s (2K Games, 2007) use of voice recorders, *A:I* distributes fragments of background story leading Amanda to ask that perennial videogame narrative question—"What happened here?" As with a number of action-adventure titles such as *Dead Space* (EA, 2008) and *The Last of Us* (SCE, 2013), *A:I* is a game where the player fills the role of an environmental detective.

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[162] See Hope (2015).
[163] See Hamilton (2014) for instance.
[164] This is in keeping with the logic of the film series. For instance, in *Aliens*, when Ripley attempts to reassure Newt that soldiers have arrived to protect her, Newt responds: "It won't make any difference."

Interactivation

The opening minutes of the source film give the audience a tour of the interior of the spaceship Nostromo, during which, the crew are in cryosleep. These delicate, prowling camera shots go to the heart of the cat and mouse theme of the film, as though the camera is taking on the perspective of the hunter-like Xenomorph.[165] Similarly, the game employs first-person perspective stealth gameplay that mainly takes place in the dimly-lit, claustrophobic corridors and rooms on the Sevastopol space station. The dynamic and reactive "sense driven, not pattern-based"[166] emergent (Sweetser, 2008) nature of the Xenomorph encounters combine with other gameplay mechanics—the motion tracker (Figure 34), environment, perspective, visual and sonic[167] design, and pacing—to interactivate the key emotional registers of fear, terror, and suspense.

Frome and Smuts (2004) discuss creative suspense in videogames, arguing that "videogames can be most effective in generating suspense not by highlighting their unique ability to be interactive, but, to the contrary, by limiting interactivity at key points, thereby turning players into helpless spectators" (p. 13). Frome and Smuts draw upon such examples as *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell* (Ubisoft, 2002) where due to the stealth genre mechanics inherent in the game, the player must "endure long periods of relative helplessness" (p. 29) by staying still and hiding in shadows. This quality is perhaps the central condition / motif of *A:I.* Frome and Smuts note that "helplessness heightens suspense because it foregrounds its key elements: fear, hope and uncertainty" (p. 14). The authors then go on to cite Carroll's "Towards a Theory of Film Suspense" (1996) in which he argues "most suspense films try to get the audience invested in story outcomes by arousing moral emotions through characterisation" (p. 16). Where Carroll claims that suspense in films is created via a kind of ethical involvement, Frome and Smuts argue that games take a different strategy—suspense is generated by foregrounding a player's sense of personal vulnerability.

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[165] Significantly, just as in the source film, the game features only one Xenomorph rather than the usual maximalist first-person design choice of wave after wave of enemies.
[166] Hope (2015).
[167] See Bullock and Whetman (2015) for a Game Developers Conference presentation by Byron Bullock Senior Sound Designer for Creative Assembly in which he details the practical efforts to create emotion and perceptually subjective perspective.

Keogh (2014b) sums up the reasons *A:I* achieves this feeling of suspense and how the game captures the essence of the *Alien* property: "[from] its commitment to its style, to its tone, to its *disempowerment* of the player from start to finish, its downtime and uneventfulness, its unleashed spontaneity—its overall dedication to evoking a certain sensation is so well-realised" (n.p.).

Figure 34. Gameplay of hunting the Xenomorph with the motion tracker

Contextual Analysis

Development Account

The project was initiated by British developer, Creative Assembly (best known for the long-running strategy game series *Total War* [1999–present]) whereby they worked on a prototype demo:

> Creative Assembly's Alistair Hope and Jude Bond worked together with a small team to develop a survival-horror prototype designed to sell Sega on the notion of

> letting them play with the *Alien* brand it had recently acquired. "Not that we were really prepared to make it," Hope says. "We were in a position to make it, but we didn't have the team or the tools." ("Isolation," 2014, p. 65)

With the rest of the studio working on *Total War* titles, this team focused on gameplay strategies for the kind of *Alien* game they wanted to make:

> In six weeks, a "handful of guys" put together a proof of concept, which in its very earliest forms had a player-controlled xenomorph in place of the complex decision-making tree that would eventually dictate its behaviour. The decisions made by the alien player in those miniature games of hide and seek would later form the basis of the creature's AI. ("Isolation," 2014, p. 65)

The desire to build the demo stemmed from a long-standing appreciation of the franchise: "In a way, that was just us being fanboys, just having a chance to build some alien environments." ("Isolation," 2014, p. 65). Alistair Hope's intention for the game was to return to "Ridley Scott's original haunted house in space" (Hope, 2015, n.p.). Hope said that the demo contained the kernel of the game they wanted to make with "a focus on survival, not killing. Where the player was underpowered and underprepared" (Hope, 2015, n.p.).

In a thinly veiled criticism of *Aliens: Colonial Marines* members of the Creative Assembly team discussed the decision to have Ellen Ripley's daughter as the main character. Lead designer Gary Napper offered, "I think one of the strengths [of our game] is that it's not like we retconned and rewrote parts of the history…This is a character that's pretty vital that we're able to explore without breaking continuity" ("Isolation," 2014, p. 71). Similarly, Bond suggests, "To me, a strong female protagonist is part of the identity of the franchise... It wouldn't be *Alien* without that" ("Isolation," 2014, p. 71).

A key decision that significantly affected the game's form was the choice of first-person or third person perspective camera. Traditionally, survival horror games such as the *Resident Evil* series (1996–present) had been third person affairs, but testing the game

using these two camera perspectives led Hope to state the difference quite categorically: "Third-person felt like an *Alien* game. First-person felt like *Alien*" (Hope, 2015, n.p.).

The detail-oriented approach to art direction was made possible by the production studio of the source film, 20th Century Fox, handing over terabytes of reference photographs and video of archive material never seen outside of their vaults ("Isolation," 2014, p. 62). The focus on a 'used future' / 'retro future' aesthetic[168] flowed through all of the art direction decisions faced by the team. Lead artist Jude Bond's brief was straightforward: "Our central direction has been one of authenticity, to produce game content which looks and feels in keeping with the much loved universe of *Alien*" (cited in McVittie, 2014, p. 7). This sense of authenticity stretched not only to the look of objects but to the nature of their construction:

> *Alien: Isolation*'s look is informed by one rule above all others: if it couldn't be built in 1979, it's not in the game. Props such as the game's hacking device and motion tracker were built the way they would have been built on the set of the movie, with virtual black paint and stencils and duct tape wrapped around handheld televisions or old war radios. "When you put that stuff in the game, the lo-fi style starts to become a gameplay element as well," McKellan says. "The motion tracker could've been a hi-res element in the bottom corner, but that would have represented a high-fidelity HUD inside some visor. Instead, we ended up with this bulky box that only does one thing, and even then you have to point it in the right direction. It gives it a tangible feel and makes it a gameplay element, rather than just a choice of style. This chunky box is your lifeline." ("Isolation," 2014, p. 63)

Game journalist Andy Kelly (2017) interviewed a number of the people on the development team and asked for their reflections on the game. He notes, "Many consider *Isolation* to be a highlight of the series, in some instances second only to the original film. This is a testament to how faithfully Creative Assembly adapted the source material" (n.p.). User Interface Lead John McKellan opines:

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[168] It must be noted that this is one of the few videogames to be graced by an extensive large-format art book (McVittie, 2014) including hundreds of illustrations used in the development of the project.

> I had experienced nothing quite like it, and doubt I ever will again. This was a film I had watched countless times before ever thinking I'd work on that franchise, and here we were as a team, making this new, weird, intense experience for years. For people to respond to it so well, and legitimise it as a genuine, canonical chapter in this saga... and [that the game] resonated with fans as a true chapter in the series… that's just amazing. (cited in Kelly, 2017, n.p.)

This consideration of a film-to-game adaptation as not only a legitimate but perhaps canonical entry[169] in a franchise following release is an extremely rare situation shared only by games that have engaged in transmedia storytelling such as *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* and *Ghostbusters: The Game.*

Critical and Player Reception Table

Key points relating to textual factors featured in *A:I*'s reception are excerpted from critics' (underlined) and players' (non-underlined) reviews and comments and are presented in Table 12.

A:I holds a MobyRank of 86 (PS4) / 83 (PC) and a Metacritic of 79 (PS4) / 77 (XOne) / 81 (PC).

Game as Adaptation

"Walking through the ship's halls for the first time hearing the generators whirr to life and seeing the lights tick on is a powerful moment for anyone that cares about the original film." (*Alien: Isolation Review*, 2014, n.p.)

"…placing Ellen Ripley's daughter, Amanda, in the role of strong female lead does

[169] See the section on *A:I*'s transmedia state in the paratextual analysis.

help ground *Isolation* in the tradition of the film." (Harmon, 2014, n.p.)

"*Alien: Isolation* maintains the methodical buildup of Ridley Scott's 1979 film, *Alien*. If recent games based on the franchise have tarnished your memories, this could be the game to wipe everything clean. After spending a day playing *A:I*, we've learned to fear the creature all over again." (Cork, 2014, n.p.)

"*Isolation* functions as a simulator for the kind of cool moments that happen in the *Alien* films…[it's] full of moments and tropes that evoke scenes of the films without directly repeating them…It *feels* like the movies and it also nods to them in both the emergent and authored moments." (Keogh, 2014b, n.p.)

"…pays homage to the original film in numerous guises, from closely-modelled environments that mirror sets from the film to particular quotes or action scenes that also recall parallels in the original." (Sharafciger, 2015, n.p.)

"This game screams authenticity when compared to the original film." (RedMoose, 2014, n.p.)

Storytelling

"There were moments in which I *was* Ripley, impulsively sprinting away from the xenomorph when I heard it fall to the floor from a vent just behind me, and crying out when its barbed tail plunged into me from behind and emerged from my torso." (VanOrd, 2014, n.p.)

Mood and Atmosphere

"Just the atmosphere itself is enough to make this game 10 / 10." (LAWhiteFence, 2014, n.p.)

"Just watched the original *Alien*, more than holds up and this game recaptures the

original film's atmosphere perfectly." (nibbles2004, 2014, n.p.)

"While most *Alien* games take the James Cameron 'shoot everything that moves' approach to the iconic sci-fi horror series, The Creative Assembly instead focuses on the original film's claustrophobic intensity and the feeling of being relentlessly stalked by a far superior predator. The result is a game you must learn and play the way it wants you to, but the cat-and-mouse chases provide an experience that's finally worthy of the Alien." (*Alien: Isolation Review*, 2014, n.p.)

"*A:I*...succeeds as a genuine effort to capture the spirit of the film franchise in playable form, rather than a lazy attempt to use it as an easy backdrop for a cash-in with an ill-fitting genre. Oddly enough, very little of that success has to do with the storytelling…where The Creative Assembly really captures the spirit of the *Alien* universe is the actual experience of playing *Isolation*." (Harmon, 2014, n.p.)

"This game delivered more out-of-my-seat shocks than almost every other Survival Horror game of recent memory." (Sharafciger, 2015, n.p.)

World-building

"…If there's one thing Creative Assembly nailed, it's how the environments look. The view is immediately striking. The Torrens is lovingly and painstakingly detailed. With its translucent green CRT monitors and predominantly white surfaces, the game immerses you into the lo-fi, 1979-vision of *Alien* effectively." (*Alien: Isolation Review*, 2014, n.p.)

"It's a lot of little things—the perfectly re-created environments, the look and feel of the retro-futuristic technology and interfaces—and one very, very big thing. I mean, of course, the Alien himself, who lives up to his reputation about as well as you could hope for from a videogame foe. He's quick, deadly, unpredictable, and smart enough to keep you on your toes…In effect, every time he's around, the game becomes a blown-out version of the original film's climactic final showdown." (Harmon, 2014,

n.p.)

Mechanics

"…The Creative Assembly is poised to bring something unusual to games—a sci-fi horror game that isn't reliant on dumping crates of ammo at anything that moves. Instead, *A:I* maintains the methodical buildup of Ridley Scott's 1979 film, *Alien*." (Keogh, 2014b, n.p.)

"I found myself checking the in-game map furiously, pre-planning my contingency exit before I set foot into each room, roughly trying to calculate how much time I had to search for a keycard while making sure that I was in close proximity to a known hiding spot like a locker, vent or a door with a manual override switch. This game really made me change my survival horror playing habits like no other I've experienced." (Sharafciger, 2015, n.p.)

"...it's just a long, boring, sluggish, pedantic exercise in stealth movement…you have to walk, and walk, and walk…along winding tunnels, winding paths…another path, another door, with NOTHING that happens in between. You can actually spend hours…under a table…just to be instantly killed and have to start it again from the last save point." (Razor66, 2014, n.p.)

"It's absolutely terrifying at times…the internal struggle of 'Do I make a run for it?' really makes the game a blast…on the other hand…Where nothing happens, is equally as unsettling…you never feel safe in any situation." (RedMoose, 2014, n.p.)

Fandom

"…if this game is disappointing for you then you're not a true alien fan." (LAWhiteFence, 2014, n.p.)

"The reason the franchise is still relevant is because the first two films are masterpieces… *Alien: Isolation* is far from perfect, but it is pretty good, especially if you love *Alien*." (MilitantRadical, 2014, n.p.) "As a fan of the original *Alien*, I found this entry to be incredibly immersive and true to the film, even inspirational in a way that HR Giger would have been extremely proud." (PhantasySatire, 2014, n.p.)
Critical Praise "Developer Creative Assembly claims to understand the things that make the series tick. It turns out their promises are only partly true. The game does successfully capture what so many have failed to achieve: the alien is both terrifying and truly a threat." (*Alien: Isolation Review*, 2014, n.p.) "With a beautifully crafted world inspired by Ridley Scott's original masterpiece... [the game employs] a truly exquisite use of sound design to help invoke fear, adrenaline, and isolation." (Rainwhole, 2014, n.p.)

Table 12. Alien: Isolation Critical and Player Reception Table

Due to its proximity to the release of *Colonial Marines*, many commentators viewed *Alien: Isolation* in light of this prior disappointment. Commentators frequently began discussions of *A:I* by making mention of the damage caused by *Colonial Marines* to the *Alien* franchise, and how *A:I*'s marked difference in approach and execution demonstrated both the considerable mistranslation of the license, and in turn, the care and sensitivity taken with the license on the part of the *A:I* team.

Chief among points made by commentators was the game's ability to accurately capture the *tone* and *feel* of the license (particularly *Alien*). A term that reappeared frequently was "authentic." According to the data collected, this was achieved via the following means: Firstly, critics and players praised the game's key decision of employing

Amanda Ripley as the playable character as a means to mirror the point of view presented in the existing series entries—namely her mother, Ellen. In terms of physical environment, opinions were uniform in their appreciation of the meticulous (and even loving) approach to detail taken in creating spaces for the game. The game's approach to dealing with horror was found to be consistent with the first film in the series—especially the fear created by the genuine power imbalance that exists between humans and the alien. The game's claustrophobic settings, measured pace, and temporal build featured heavily in many reactions. A vast majority praised the distinctly different approach to pacing compared with most contemporary AAA action games, only a few using it as a point of mockery. While not replaying scenes from the film series, several sequences in the game draw directly from memorable moments from the existing films providing players with positive recognition that avoided artless fan-service.

Paratextual Analysis

Adaptation System

The *Alien* franchise is coded as an A1 Adaptation System. The 1979 film features an original screenplay, albeit highly steeped in horror genre tropes. While *A:I* follows the production of a vast number of series entries, the game deliberately takes *Alien* as its prime reference point.[170] The game draws upon franchise narrational knowledge (particular from *Aliens*) to function as an interquel.

Transmedia State

The scale and scope of the *Alien* franchise is complex, encompassing interlocking and non-interlocking entries across various media. The first four *Alien* films were sequels released in fictional chronological order with *Prometheus* acting as a distant prequel to the 1979 film and the first in what is referred to as the *Alien* Prequel series.

[170] In terms of the intertextual influence of the *Alien* franchise on videogames, Keogh (2014b) makes the claim that, "Videogames have a long history of being influenced by the Alien franchise; though, usually more by *Aliens* than *Alien*. Almost every sci-fi shooter's depiction of technology and spaceships and space marines can be traced back to *Aliens* in some form or another" (n.p.).

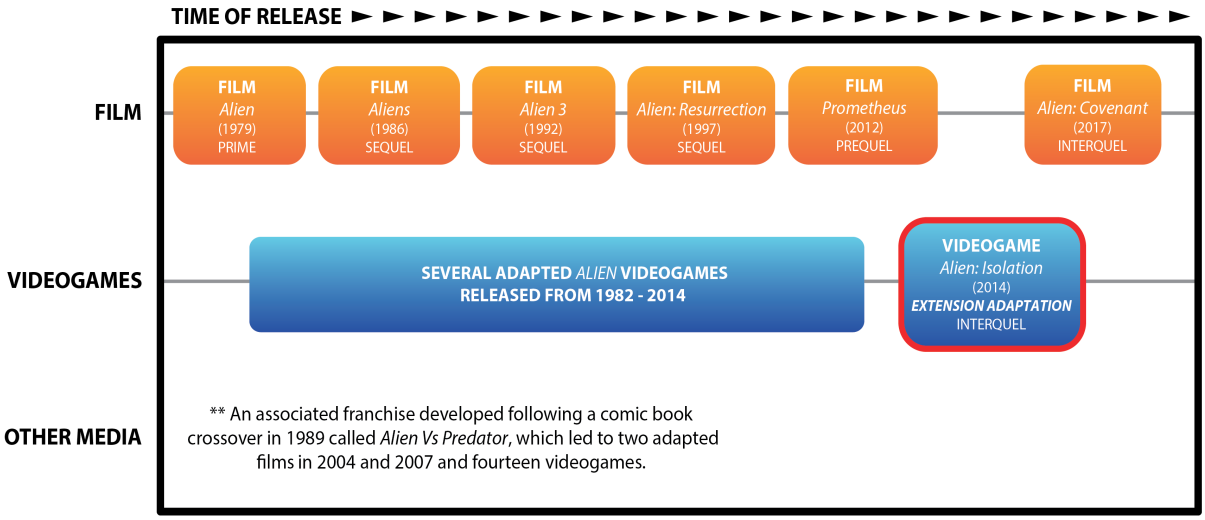

Figure 35. Alien: Isolation Transmedia State

Aside from the five *Alien*-titled feature films and *Prometheus*, the *Alien* paratexts are decidedly non-canon affairs. Even though the events of *A:I* are entirely consistent with the *Alien* series internal continuity, *A:I* is not officially considered canon by the license-holders, 20th Century Fox.[171] The position of the *Alien vs. Predator* (2004–2007) cross-over spin-off films seem to occupy an alternate timeline (falling under Jenkins's transmedia concept of "multiplicity"). To further complicate the franchise, a paratextual narrative braid[172] suggests a connection between the *Alien* series and *Blade Runner*, in that the somewhat parallel characters of Peter Weyland (the head of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation or as it called in-universe "the company") and Dr. Eldon Tyrell (head of the Tyrell Corporation in *Blade Runner*), may be friends/rivals opening up the possibilities for an even more vast interconnected fictional universe.

This chapter identified various permutations of sequence elements inherent in the Extension Model in games that act as a sequel to *The Thing* (1982), a prequel to *The Warriors* (1979), and an interquel within the *Alien* franchise. The next chapter deals with a comprehensive comparison of the case studies from Chapters 6–8, their

[171] Kelly (2017) notes however, "This wasn't some non-canon spin-off, but a legitimate part of the *Alien* series" (n.p.). Aside from this quote, it is unclear whether 20th Century Fox considers the game canon as this has only been officially granted to the *Alien* feature films.
[172] Discussed in Trumbore (2012).

relationship to the proposed models, and an articulation of how this analysis fulfils the aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter 9.

Model Discussion

The film-to-game adaptation models were developed by considering a wide range of case study options and assigning conceptual categories to them, which in turn came about from an understanding of adaptation theory and transmedia theory. In theorising these models, there were various permutations and alternative frameworks that were later rejected from the main focus (namely models named Extrapolation and Amalgamation). Likewise, the selection of case study games underwent scrutiny pertaining to their relevance and worth in illustrating the particular model and their specific contribution to that model.[173] Games that were the object of case studies are considered not only as works of art, but as cultural productions, as industrial entities, and as transmedia entries in a series.

Reflection Model Discussion

Each case study demonstrating the Reflection Model has a specific set of factors that qualify them to represent the model in alternative ways. In the case of *GoldenEye 007*, a key theme is the adaptation of James Bond into a first-person shooter, so it is not only an adaptation of the source film but an adaptation of the Bond character and his associated elements. The "Bond style" is strongly associated with this title—much like the films, it is a slick and stylish game with high production values, complex action sequences with smooth progression and transitions. For a fifth-generation game this was a standout display of game design, the level of which was usually reserved for the association with big-budget games such as *Halo* (Microsoft Studios, 2001). Movie-licensed games of the 1980s and 1990s were by and large disreputable remediations, as

[173] In retrospect, another useful approach to case study selection could have been selecting a case study of poor-quality adaptation as counterpoint to those of intrinsic excellence. The inclusion of these types of adaptations may isolate and identify factors that provide insight into the complex process of film-to-game adaptation while being sensitive to the exigencies of creative production that leads to various quality outcomes.

discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Appearing in 1997, *GoldenEye 007* presented players and critics with an outstanding game, not only in terms of its first-person shooter mechanics on console and four-way split screen multiplayer innovations, but also because it was a quality adaptation of a major motion picture.

In terms of development and release, the case study games represent different approaches. *GoldenEye 007* was developed at the same time as the source film production with an intention of simultaneous release. However, this deadline was exceeded to the point of potential failure, with *GoldenEye 007* only releasing two years after the film. Alternately, *LSWII* is a clear non-simultaneous release with relation to the source films, however at the time of the game's release, LEGO were actively involved in the manufacture and sale of LEGO *Star Wars* playsets.

In the case of *LSWII* there are multiple sets of licenses in play—the *Star Wars* license, the LEGO license, and the LEGO *Star Wars* license (LEGO *Star Wars* playsets having seen release prior to the creation of the videogame). The core approach of *LSWII* is parodic reflection adaptation, due primarily to the secondary adaptation of LEGO brick abstraction. This allows for a radical shift from the hypotext's melodramatic tone, while still fulfilling the model's criteria for a reflection adaptation of the original trilogy. Another central motivation for choosing this game is the highly significant source material of the *Star Wars* franchise, which is the most extensive media property in terms of cultural and economic import (see Gray, 2010). Since the first *Star Wars* film in 1982, dozens of videogames have been released based on the property, making it one of the most frequently adapted film-to-game movie licenses.

These case studies represent a spectrum of involvement by the film production in the game adaptation. Where *GoldenEye 007* was afforded some involvement by the film production through the access to the film's set and production crew during shooting, in the case of *LSWII*, developers had access to LucasFilm resources. However, there is no evidence that the developers of *LSWII* were able to interact with key production personnel from the original film.

Of the three proposed models, the Reflection Model has the most limitations and restrictions with regard to transmedia state, due to its definition as the most direct form

of film-to-game adaptation. This restricts the amount of expansion and new story information being contributed to the property. In terms of representation, both games (albeit an abstracted version in *LSWII*) base their character models on the actors playing the characters in the films. The approach of *LSWII* is one of LEGO abstraction as elucidated by Aldred (2014). Technology restricted the inclusion of voices from the voice actors in *GoldenEye 007*, whereas *LSWII* is consistent with the previous *LEGO Star Wars* release in creating mute characters.

With respect to playable characters, *GoldenEye 007* allows only one character option (James Bond) in the main playthrough, while *LSWII* allows for multiple character playability. In *LSWII* character switching is a central mechanic that mimics the ensemble nature of the source films. For instance, to complete a level, players may need Droid technology to override machines and Wookie strength to bust through barriers.

Reflection Model Addition

Reflection adaptation is a common mode of film-to-game adaptation, generally not aiming to provide radical narrative addition. However, even games that fall within the Reflection Model may contribute significant transmedia elements despite their reflection adaptation status. For instance, while the game's structure may mimic the film hypotext's plot, the game may expand or even add features such as characters, environments, scenes, or relationships as part of the practice of adaptation. One of the foremost issues inherent in reflection adaptation is adapting sequences for the hypotext that, for whatever reason, don't accord with the chosen genre mechanics of the hypertext. For instance, if a game adaptation employs traditional action game tropes, there may be a difficulty in adapting non-action orientated sequences from the hypotext. These non-action sequences traditionally have been rendered as cut-scenes within the game adaptation. This may then mean that additional playable sequences are required to bolster the game's "play time" as Juul (2005) defined it.

The Reflection Model frequently employs the common adaptation strategy known as addition, often by way of inventing a new character, or a bridging sequence which adds a story aspect that is entirely new. However, those audiences familiar with the hypotext may feel such additions ring false, and as such, they may cause a kind of rupture

moment in the gameplay experience. Many times, an additional playable sequence is shoehorned into a Reflection Model adaptation, which can often break the flow of the game's narrative trajectory. The addition of a new sequence may refocus the narrative in a way that shifts the narrative momentum of the adaptation. These sequences may lack subtlety or nuance, and this is often compounded by a lack of time to conceptualise and integrate the addition in the development process, in order to make a simultaneous release date.

Games like *LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures* (LucasArts, 2008), *LEGO Jurassic World* (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015), and *LEGO Marvel's Avengers* (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2016) are examples of a sub-category of videogame adaptation in which multiple films in a series are contained and packaged in a single game release. Pioneered by *LEGO Star Wars: The Videogame* and *LSWII*, these are "multi-film reflection adaptations." *LEGO Jurassic World* combines reflection adaptation of the four films in the franchise: the original *Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993) and its sequels, *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1997), *Jurassic Park III* (Johnston, 2001), and the titular *Jurassic World* (Trevorrow, 2015). Essentially the films are packaged together within the one game, where the story events of one film flow into the story events of the next by virtue of a contiguous level structure.

TT Games's multi-film LEGO adaptations generally avoid the need for significant addition (usually required in a single-film reflection adaptation game), in fact achieving the opposite by way of compression. Non-action sequences are presented as compressed cut-scenes and the signature action sequences from the multiple source films are interactivated into playable levels.

Intersection Model Discussion

Cases of Intersection Model adaptation are relatively rare in film-to-game adaptation; however, this is not to say they do not contribute meaning to the phenomena. *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* can be cited as another intersection game, but perhaps the other most significant example is *The Godfather* (EA, 2006), adapted from the film *The*

Godfather (Coppola, 1972).[174] *The Godfather* was initially a second case study in the Intersection Model chapter, however it was determined unnecessary to devote an entire case study to this game. This was due to a general similarity of approach to Intersection adaptation, albeit the game genre and narrative characteristics are explicitly different to *Blade Runner*'s. However, a comparative discussion here helps to illustrate the model further.

Both *Blade Runner* (1997) and *The Godfather* (2006) exhibit a number of shared factors that indenture them to the Intersection Model. This includes the general nature of the game adaptation's narrative relationship, which weaves together and parallels story events from the source film, the adaptation strategy of "addition," and the presence of an invented character that is non-existent in the hypotext and fulfils the role of the player-character.[175]

In both *Blade Runner* (1997) and *The Godfather* (2006), the game revolves around the actions of the added invented character, which is the only playable character. In the case of *Blade Runner* (1997), McCoy fulfils the traits of the film hypotext character, and is able to exist simultaneously and function separately to Deckard. In *The Godfather* (2006), the game's player-character is named Aldo Trapani, and has been retrofitted into the narrative of part one of Coppola's *The Godfather* saga. Aldo is a 'jack of all trades' type character who is sent on a variety of missions requiring various skills. Aldo does not directly mimic the film's main character Michael Corleone, rather he is called upon to fulfil a wide variety of tasks throughout the game that both replays and connects story events from the film. He can also be seen to be a relatively blank character with few character traits, which is fitting as the player is able to customise the character's look and name at the start of the game.

EA executive producer on *The Godfather* (2006) David DeMartini highlights the importance of choosing the player perspective and how this shaped the game narrative:

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[174] A game adaptation of *The Godfather Part II* (Coppola, 1974) was released by EA in 2009.
[175] Intersection Model games may also choose to elevate a minor character from the hypotext into the role of playable avatar.

> We tended to turn the story upside down. In the film and in the book you tend to experience *The Godfather* from the perspective of the Don, the person who's giving the orders. In the video game you're actually able to create a character that looks like yourself and then actually experience moving up through the family ranks and doing a lot of the dirty work so you're involved in a lot more of the action. ("*The Godfather* GT Interview", 2006, n.p.).

In his book *Hollywood Gamers* (2010), Brookey's chapter on *The Godfather* (2006) argues for the agency of the player over that of the director of the film Francis Ford Coppola, due primarily to the avatar being an invented character: "In this game experience, Coppola's agency becomes immaterial, because the story the game player completes stands alongside, but apart from, the one told by Coppola" (p. 56).

Considering strategies of narrative adaptation, *Blade Runner* (1997) is comprised of parallel events that take place at the same time as Deckard's story events—the invented character McCoy gains information about the events from the film, and in each instance, these occur off-screen and the character is told about them second-hand. While McCoy's actions can be seen to parallel the story events from the source film, in *The Godfather* (2006), events of the source film are directly presented in cut-scenes with some featuring Aldo as playable sequences, in addition to Aldo engaging in actions that can be assumed to have occurred off-screen in an effort to bridge the on-screen sequences. The events of the film act as both anchor points and narrative rationales for the majority of the gameplay missions. Echoing DeMartini's comments above, Brookey argues that the focus of the game shifts towards carrying out the orders of the family bosses: "the game player must complete the often-violent actions of the story that Coppola kept off the screen. The game player must do the dirty work: sneaking into stables, crawling around a toilet, and actually pulling the trigger several times" (2010, p. 64).

The events from Coppola's film are seen from a different perspective, so it can be viewed as a more direct example of Wolf's paraquel: "A narrative sequence element which runs parallel, that is, simultaneously, with an already-existing narrative sequence element or elements, often covering known events from a different perspective" (p. 379). In the case of *The Godfather* (2006), the invented character works to achieve a

change in focalisation of the game's presentation of the story events, whereas in *Blade Runner* (1997), the adaptation strategy achieved with the invented character is closer to a shift in emphasis.

It can thus be seen that the major strategy that differentiates the two games and therefore the approaches to intersection adaptation is that *Blade Runner* (1997) never presents scenes from the source film directly, whereas *The Godfather* (2006) does. To frame this approach another way, *The Godfather* (2006) creates new unseen interquel scenes, and with the recreation of scenes using the invented player-character, exhibits qualities of the intraquel, as well as also the paraquel. Depending on how strictly the use of the definition "paraquel" is enforced, it could be argued that *Blade Runner* also exhibits this sequence element, but this is far more evident in *The Godfather* (2006).

Most recently, *Star Wars Battlefront II* (EA, 2017) incorporates both interquel material—as the events take place in the fictional 30-year gap that exists between *Return of the Jedi* (1983) and *The Force Awakens* (2015)—but also most importantly, the single player campaign narrative is told from the alternative point of view of the Empire, in the form of Imperial officer Iden Versio. For instance, an early cut-scene in the game shows Iden's crestfallen reaction to the destruction of the second Death Star from the surface of the moon of Endor. This refocalisation of the concluding events of *Return of the Jedi*, leads *Battlefront II* to partially act as a paraquel in addition to being an interquel.

Extension Model Discussion

The Extension Model chapter contains the largest number of case studies of each the models in this thesis. This is primarily due to Extension Model games possessing the highest permutation of sequence elements of any one model, and as such, each major sequence element permutation justifies the inclusion of a case study to demonstrate the particular extension properties available within this model. Most generally, *The Thing*

(2002)[176] acts as a sequel sequence element to its respective source film, while *Alien: Isolation* is an interquel, and a sizable section of *The Warriors* (2005) acts as a prequel.

Considering the Extension Model, it can be seen that it is rare for Reflection adaptation to occur. In the selected case studies, it is only seen in *The Warriors* (2005), as the game begins by replaying the meeting that takes place at the start of the film, and then immediately flashes back to three months prior for the start of the game's first mission. Though the game incorporates Reflection adaptation, the game is predominantly a direct prequel.

Not all Extension Model games exhibit sequence element tendencies with a direct temporal connection to source films of the franchise. It will be rare to have a property that can exemplify this, as it requires a complex internal fictional chronology, however, *Star Wars* has one of the most complex fictional chronologies in all of popular entertainment, and here it is useful to consider the case of *KotOR*. For this game adaptation, developers drew on the little explored timeline of The Old Republic era, such that the film license's universe and mythology as a whole forms the source property of the game, and it is set in the distant past.[177] In this kind of extension adaptation, the practical advantage to developer BioWare was an ability to set the game within the *Star Wars* universe without being tied down by decades of canonical events that are associated with the period surrounding the feature films. This meant an expansive freedom to create entirely new characters, worlds and events that didn't require slavish continuity; at the time of *KotOR's* creation, it was deemed to be part of the *Star Wars* "Expanded Universe"[178] and not considered canonical.

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[176] *Ghostbusters: The Video Game* (Vivendi, 2009) was initially included as a case study as it was considered the de facto official sequel to the film series. This is also the case with *The Thing*, however the differentiating factor is that the latter was developed with limited involvement of the film creatives, while *Ghostbusters* (2009) is a rare case where key creative film personnel wrote the story for the game.

[177] Developer BioWare did not create this timeline, as The Old Republic period had already been explored as part of a comic series and was accepted as part of the earliest mythology in the *Star Wars* timeline.

[178] After Disney bought LucasFilm, the Story Group in charge of canon regrouped certain existing franchise entries (such as comics) to be considered as part of "*Star Wars Legends*." As of 2016, the season two finale of *Star Wars Rebels* (now canon), events take place on a planet (Malakor) that exists within the *KotOR* era. By virtue of this connection from a story event to a *KotOR* location—this being the first time that a reference to an Old Republic location is seen in canon *Star Wars* works—it can be argued that *KotOR* is in fact now also canon. *KotOR* is a prime example of a corporate franchise concern with issues surrounding multiplicity and continuity.

It is useful to consider *KotOR* in an effort to delineate the boundaries of the Extension Model. At no stage in *KotOR* is there a character seen in any of the canon films. But this does not mean that it's *not* extension: the game makers have carefully considered that there is a continuity between the spaces, actions, and events that take place in *KotOR* flowing through to the period of the saga films. It demonstrates that the same characters, locations, or connections to narrative events from the source film series do not need to be present in order for the game adaptation to be considered an Extension Model adaptation.

It is also worthwhile to consider *KotOR* in relation to Extrapolation Model adaptation, in that it is seemingly disconnected from the source film series, and it does not explore the spaces of the film series. The game however, fits within the Extension Model since *KotOR*'s events do not take place in a uchronic nowhere zone. In terms of franchise fictional timeline, *KotOR* is explicitly set 5000 years before the rise of the Galactic Empire. As the game is clearly part of the fictional timeline, it acts as a sequence element in the form of a distant prequel, which is one of the characteristics of the Extension Model.

Comparative Model Discussion

In this section, the proposed models (Figure 36) are considered giving precedence to concerns of adaptation strategies, world-building, game genre, and interactivation.

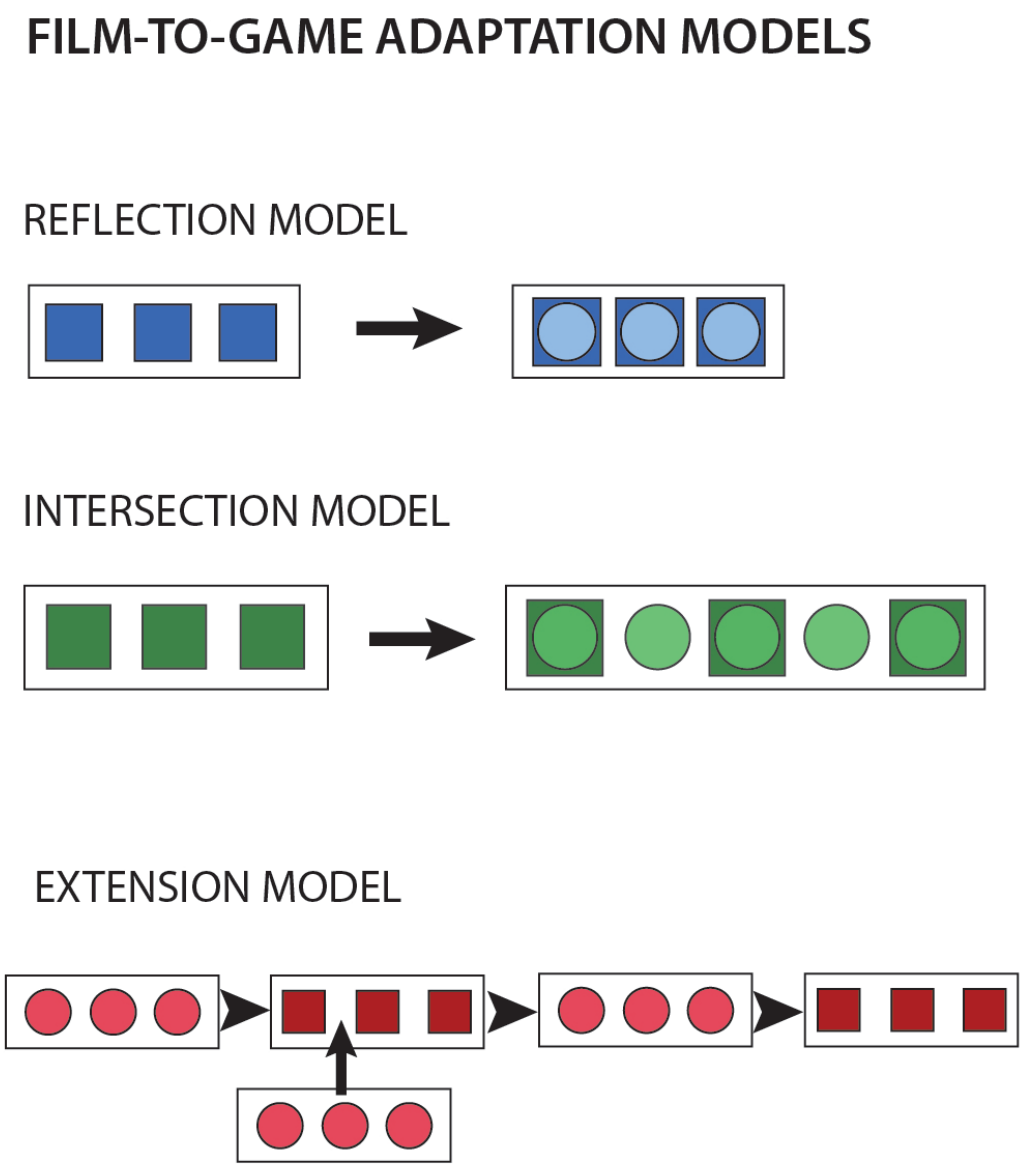

Figure 36. The Three Film-to-game Adaptation Models

When considering adaptation strategies, it is useful to firstly consider Reflection and Intersection Models together, as they have a degree of crossover due to the Intersection Model containing a Reflection adaptation approach in its nature. In terms of narrational theory, the Reflection Model adaptation is holistically based on the narrative of the source film, while the Intersection Model either employs a paraquel or an intraquel approach (or a combination of both) in relation to the existing story. The Reflection Model and the Intersection Model may share textual characteristics, in particular, adaptation strategies such as addition and expansion; however, there are key points of

differentiation. The Reflection Model depends heavily on the game adaptation being based on the film's plot, however, the Intersection Model allows more deviation from the source text. The Intersection Model may employ all of the same strategies of adaptation that exist in the Reflection Model, though they serve different fundamental purposes. Adaptation strategies like addition and expansion employed in Reflection Model games, serve the purpose of adapting the source film's overall plot, characters, and themes to reflectively mimic them in game form. In Intersection Model games, there may be *significant* addition and *significant* expansion, so that from a macro view of the entire work, such bridging moments and expansions take on far greater significance, to the extent that the added or invented story aspects may change the nature of certain elements in the source film presented in the game adaptation.

The Reflection Model draws from Wagner's concept of the "direct adaptation," considered to be a weak mode of transmedia due to the lack of significant "addition" to the franchise. The subsequent models of Intersection and Extension are "additive" due to their very definitions, and works exhibiting these model's characteristics may be considered stronger candidates for transmedia storytelling. In terms of approach to narrative, Reflection Model games can be seen to hold a lower level of curiosity for players than Intersection Model, Extension Model, and perhaps Amalgamation Model games. Players who are familiar with the source film of a Reflection Model game are already aware of the story presented in the reflection game, while Intersection and Extension Model games present internarrative sequence elements designed to promote narrative curiosity in the player.

Considering the Extension Model, we can view its function as a bridge or interstitial narrative to the source film's prequels or sequels. Reflection Model adaptations may recreate major events which represent memorable moments from the source film. While these moments may exist on screen for mere seconds, the game targets them as touchstones and elongates them for the purposes of expanding gameplay duration and capitalises on the film's more recognisable moments. This elongation of a crucial moment may be to the detriment of the game; something may be beautiful in its fleeting existence and to prolong it may kill its poetry.

A particular strategy found in games that employ the Intersection and Extension Model, concerns character continuity where major characters are invented to substitute for a film's protagonist (or supporting characters) but operate as doubles of these original characters. *Blade Runner*'s (1997) McCoy, *The Thing*'s (2002) Blake, and *Alien*: *Isolation*'s Ellen Ripley employ this strategy, as does as game like *KotOR* to a lesser extent with a collection of *Star Wars* archetypes. In the case of *Blade Runner* (1997), such a strategy accounts for what Crogan (2002) considers to be the game's uncanny quality, exemplified by textual characteristics such as the Deckard / McCoy doppelgänger. While these alternative characters firstly fulfil the traits of their hypotext character counterparts, they provide further adaptation functionality in the different Models: in the case of an Intersection Model game they offer the benefit of a character who is able to exist simultaneously and function separately to the source character; in the case of the Extension Model, a character who exists prior to or following the events of the source property is not bound by the existent fictional timeline established in other media.

All case studies in the Extension Model contain either major or minor characters from the source films. In the case of *A:I* and *The Thing* (2002), the crossover character between game and film is the main enemy protagonist; in *The Thing* (2002) there are also additional invented playable characters. With *A:I*, the playable character is a minor tangential one from the film series who holds narrative and thematic significance to the key protagonist.

Throughout the discussion on world-building in the case studies, time and again particular details of game *mise-en-scène* and sound design were identified to be emblematic of the vision and sound of the source film or franchise. Even though videogames present the player with a sometimes remarkably detailed game space attempting to create a fully realised verisimilitudinous virtual environment, a level of abstraction from the source will always exist, independent of a designer's skill or the boundaries of technical limitations. In each case study, the thesis focused on particular details that clearly exemplify world-building in operation. In videogames, the combination of these textual details is able to create a world-building gestalt, such that the player can nullify the abstraction and become immersed in an authentically rendered virtual environment representative of the source property.

In each case study game, a genre operates to elucidate key thematic, dramatic, and / or tonal characteristics of the source film—for instance, *Blade Runner* (1997) as a point-and-click adventure game, *The Thing* (2002) as a survival horror game, *The Warriors* (2005) as an action beat-'em-up brawler. In film-to-game adaptation a strong connection exists between the source film genre, the adaptation's game genre, and its associated set of game mechanics, a point which is theorised in Wolf's concept of interactivation. However, the thesis posits that interactivation operates independently of the model of adaptation, as this process is inescapable when making a game: at its core it must be interactive and mechanics concretise a game's rule systems for the player. In all the cases presented in this thesis, the translation of theme into mechanics or "mechanics as metaphor,"[179] demonstrates ludological implementation in adapting the source property essence, captured in Juul's (2003) phrase, "the heart of gameness."

The six case studies demonstrate that each adaptation model is valid and can result in works of intrinsic excellence. The success of application of film-to-game adaptation model is dependent on a complex and interconnected range of factors particular to each case such as the game's approach to tone, narrative strategies, transmedial relationship to the property, world-building and interactivation of key themes, events and actions.

Amalgamation Adaptation

The Amalgamation Model was initially conceived as a fourth model, but later omitted in its full capacity due to textual overlap and redundancy with the Reflection Model, as well as a categorical inconsistency to the other three Models as its main characteristic was the presence of a self-contained game ecosystem. This model incorporated works that exist within multiple universes of multiple properties, using characters and / or environments from separate licenses[180] in the same space. The Amalgamation Model therefore accommodated cross-overs from one universe to another, creating a kind of mash-up between properties. In Chapter 2, the concept of convergence is discussed in

[179] See the Extra Credits' web video regarding mechanics as metaphor (Extra Credits, 2012, n.p.).
[180] The licensing of *LEGO Dimensions* is outlined in an article titled "The Ludicrously Lucrative Licensing Deals Behind 'Lego Dimensions'" (Baker, 2016, n.p.).

light of games and films sharing certain distinct characteristics. The very existence of a movie-licensed game is an index of media convergence; however, Amalgamation adaptation operates on a different register in terms of convergence (Panganiban, 2015).

Games which exhibit characteristics of the Amalgamation Model represent a relatively recent turn in licensed movie games, and the main exponents are the toys-to-life games *Disney Infinity* and *LEGO Dimensions*. Amalgamation is an approach where there is a privileging of story world and perhaps characters from the source film rather than particular story events or plot. With all other models, the defining factors that allocate a particular game to a particular model are clear-cut and dependent on aspects such as sequence elements. However, the idea of amalgamation is more complicated, and sees defining characteristics based on an entirely different spectrum of ecosystem and interoperability. Amalgamation adaptation incorporates a transfranchisal ecosystem. The point of difference to other models is the affordance of interoperability, which describes the ability of elements to connect with one another—for example, one character or one environment can be swapped out for another—fostering the condition of multiplicity in terms of Jenkins's transmedia aesthetic. This tendency signaled a new phase in videogame transmedia practice, albeit one only lasting a short time. Both *Disney Infinity* and *LEGO Dimensions* are transmedial, but additional to this, they can be seen as "transfranchisal" (Wolf, 2014b, xxiii). Due to this playful sense of transfranchisal interoperability, Amalgamation adaptation may afford *emergent* gameplay:[181] "Emergent gameplay is usually taken to be situations where a game is played in a way that the game designer did not predict" (Juul, 2005, p. 76).

Game franchises that employ a strategy of combining existing media characters and worlds is not entirely a new development. The long-running *Kingdom Hearts* series (Square Enix, 2002–present) is neither toys-to-life, nor does it feature a dedicated game ecosystem, however, the franchise crosses over Disney and Pixar characters with those from game developer Square Enix. Brookey (2010) discusses how the earlier *Kingdom*

[181] Juul (2002, 2005) describes two general approaches to gameplay models—games of progression and the games of emergence. Games of progression are relatively linear experiences authored by the game designer, so that a player is generally limited to follow the experience as the designer has laid it out. Games of emergence are games in which gameplay develops from player driven interactions with the game system. If one considers games of progression to be highly authored experiences dictated by the game designer, toybox gameplay is entirely dependent on choices made by the player in the creation of their toybox (based on the tools available in *Disney Infinity 3.0.*).

Hearts games "function as cultural hybrids, weaving into a single narrative characters that are strongly identified with both American and Japanese popular culture" (p. 29). Transfranchisal adaptation is a significant consideration within the Amalgamation Model because these cross-over / mash-up works are "what if?" scenarios that extend franchise universes and disregard internal canon.

We can say that the emergence of games that fit into the Amalgamation Model is an industrial response to the user-initiated trend towards mash-up culture (Gray, 2010, pp. 143–174). Amalgamation adaptation sees the trend towards mash-up realised in a licensed sense and made possible through the interoperability of licensed characters within the ecosystem. Mash-up is more clearly identified in *LEGO Dimensions* where a constant combination of characters and environments from multiple franchises exists in the authored gameplay.

The trend toward building these "entertainment supersystems" as Kinder describes them, has recently generated a great deal of currency which can be seen in the economic success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. However, the recent cancellations of both *Disney Infinity* and *LEGO Dimensions* can be associated with the underperformance of the DC Extended Universe (DCEU) and Universal Studios' Dark Universe.[182]

This chapter identifies properties of each of the adaptation models discussed in this thesis and compares each model in terms of salient characteristics, referring to both case studies presented in chapters 6–8 as well as other examples falling within each model's purview. In the final chapter, the thesis concludes with relevant points of discussion emanating from the study's framework of analysis.

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[182] *The Mummy* (Kurtzman, 2017) reboot was planned as the first release as part of Universal's Dark Universe connected franchise. The film was such a failure that the producers in charge of it left the studio and the entire connected universe project was placed on hold. The licensed tie-in for the film is a new direction in film-to-game adaptations; developer WayForward's near simultaneous release, *The Mummy Demastered* (WayForward, 2017) used pixel-based sprites and two-dimensional representation akin to a 16-bit 4th generation game—an approach that mitigates the high development cost of going down the "photorealism route" on 8th generation consoles. WayForward used the same style on a previous licensed title *Aliens Infestation* (Sega, 2011) for the Nintendo DS set after the events of *Alien 3* (Fincher, 1992). *Aliens Infestation* was designed to be a port of the console game *Aliens: Colonial Marines* (2013), and as such, shares plot elements with that game.

Conclusion

The key contribution to scholarship offered by the thesis is the framework of analysis comprised of a combination of registers—textual, contextual, and paratextual—which gives rise to the three proposed models discussed in the previous chapter. The function of the framework of analysis is to understand not only the similarities within each model but the specificities that each of the six case studies provide into the process of film-to-game adaptation.

Registers of Analysis Discussion

In utilising a system which includes a combination of registers of analysis, this research has attempted to provide multiple frames of reference in order to provide an understanding of film-to-game adaptation. At the heart of these registers was the textual analysis in which issues of narrative form, world-building, and interactivation were investigated. This was surrounded with a consideration of both contextual and paratextual factors. An account of each case's development process gave insight into the practical creative decision-making involved in movie-licensed game production. The collection and analysis of reviewers' and players' observations provided an impressionistic reception of case studies in popular discourse. Since cases associated with a property existed within a larger franchise framework its position in the transmedia state was identified and analysed. This multi-part system of analysis clearly positions each case, shedding light into the particular and specific modes of transformation in creative practice.

Textual Analysis

In each case study investigation, a focus was given to narrative form, world-building and interactivation. These three factors are distillations of key points of analysis in adaptation and transmedia theory, which can be tracked through Chapters 1 and 2. Traditional adaptation analyses all foreground issues of narrative; going beyond storytelling required examining the dynamic nature of fictional space via world-

building; and when a property shifts from a non-interactive medium to an interactive one in terms of adaptation this manifests itself as interactivation.

Contextual Analysis

The development accounts gathered on each case study provided varying levels of insight due to issues with available sources and contractual marketing relationships as previously discussed. The textual analysis shows the final outcome of the development, but the contextual analysis gives a roadmap as to how the game changed over the course of its production. One point that came out of the contextual analysis was an insight into why games were released at a particular time, giving cause to why a game may have shifted from a simultaneous to a non-simultaneous release. Development accounts also revealed that in a majority of cases, developers were proactive in developing their respective games rather than the games simply being a contract task to complete.

A vast majority of the sources employed in the development accounts were from a retrospective position, sometimes many years after the completion of the game. Some accounts were more detailed and this provided a deeper insight into corporate and creative concerns. Where significant retrospective information from developers was accessible (such as an *Edge* magazine "Time Extend" or a Game Developers Conference "Game Post-mortem") it allowed the greatest amount of insight into game design, production process and challenges, and provided a more reliable level of critical discussion. As the games selected for case study analysis were highly regarded, developers were generally more willing to share their experiences in making them.[183]

The cultural perception in player culture of the movie-license game is clear—since the early 1980s, these games have gained the stigma of "badness." There needs to be a distinction between the game as an adaptation, and the game as a game. First and foremost is the question—does the game exhibit a dimension of intrinsic excellence independent of the knowledge that it is an adaptation of another work? In other words, is the game captivating on its own terms? Do the formal elements of the game contribute to an engaging experience? Essentially, does the game succeed as a

[183] The exception to this was Rockstar Games, but this is due to the general company ethos of not sharing insights into development rather than the case itself.

videogame? Players and critics are primarily focused on these questions, rather than how the game functions as adaptation. In fact, few player comments related directly to the games as adaptations, which is surprising because the games are all clearly based on well-established film properties and a natural reaction to a clearly enunciated adaptation is to make an evaluative comparison to the original property.

In most reviews from both professional critics and players providing more than cursory discussion of the game, the question of the game as adaptation and the efficacy of the adaptation approach is clearly separated from the evaluation of mechanics. Critics and players rarely relate the choices made in regard to mechanics in terms of interactivation. However, the claim can be made that a game's mechanics are well-executed because interactivation was a closely considered part of the adaptation.

Reception data sees a movie-licensed game's mechanics as a type of failure: not taking into account interactivation as a primary challenge in the game adaptation, rather tending to view conscious decisions to invoke elements of the source film as a failed mechanic. An example of this is the commentary in *Alien: Isolation*—many players and critics note how much time must be spent in the game hiding from the Xenomorph and just waiting for it to pass by, deeming this a failed mechanic.

It is worthwhile to consider here the analogous situation of film critics and film adaptations. It is a far more common occurrence for film critics to make evaluative comparative comments regarding the source material of a film adaptation if the source material is well-known. This type of commentary generally relates to issues of plot and character, the aspects of film form that are clearly at the forefront of most popular film review discourse. Game critics, on the other hand, rarely discuss a game adaptation in this way. It is as if the storytelling differential between the two media is simply too vast, or that it is not an appropriate exercise to make a valid comparison on the basis of storytelling elements. It may be argued that many game critics do not possess the critical vocabulary to engage in comparative adaptation analysis, though it is surprising that even superficial evaluative comparisons are rare. When comparison is made, it is

usually regarding particular game elements independent of story, that create an impression of embodying the role of a character from the source film.[184]

Critics and players generally see these case study games as effective adaptations however, they point out flaws in game form and aesthetics. Comparing contemporaneous with non-contemporaneous critiques, flaws were isolated in contemporaneous critiques, whereas the non-contemporaneous critiques highlight the innovations and positive aspects of the case studies. This may be due partially to the sense of canonisation of these games as "great works" of the movie-licensed game. There are so few great movie-licensed games in existence, that the qualitative reflections are almost inflated over time—in hindsight, the game stands up and this is remarkable.

When setting out to collect data in the form of critical and player commentary, further consideration could be given to the nature of property knowledge and how it affects commentary. Was the user familiar with the source film prior to the game, or did they become familiar with it subsequent to the game experience? Has the user gained familiarity with the property through other texts in the property's adaptation system? How does this prior knowledge position the player's evaluative opinion of the adaptation prior to playing the game in terms of expectation and outcome? A common answer to this in user comments amounts to very high expectations of the adaptation of a beloved license. A typical player and critical response would concern the overall look, feel or mood of the game in relation to the adapted film. For instance, in a review of *Balde Runner* (1997), a player notes: "Visually speaking the game nails the look of the movie perfectly. The graphic artists were able to emulate the dark urban landscape created by Syd Mead and Ridley Scott in the original movie with aplomb" (Anonymous Gamer, 2005, n.p.).

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[184] One may consider the history of video game criticism as a contextualised factor which in some ways goes back to the roots of videogames as technical objects. The history of game criticism has been adopted from a non-discursive approach based in technical categories, rather than the philosophy of art, relying on a separation of elements. This approach of separating elements leads to a loss of understanding the relationships of how the elements affect one another. In the 1980s, most reviews would break down various factors into clear categories such as "visuals," "sound," and "gameplay." Later, PC-focused reviews foregrounded technical issues, such as framerate stability or CPU required. It could be argued that only recently with the emergence of academic game studies, videogame reviewing has started to shift more towards a discursive mode.

Considering reception analysis from both critics and players, a divide can be seen to exist between the treatment of the game as an adaptation, and the treatment of the game independent as its adaptation status, that is, a game compared with other games of its type or genre.

Paratexual Analysis

Just as textual analysis is informed by Chapters 1 and 2, the paratextual analysis is informed by Chapters 3 and 4 in terms of practical industrial concerns, and informed by Chapter 2 in terms of theoretical understanding of transmediality. This part of the analysis considered the case study game from a macro perspective, situating it within its franchise super structure. It reveals the history of the property and in the intertextual connectedness of the property to other popular texts. Here, the transmedial nature of the property was revealed, charting the progression of the properties' development across various media. It is pertinent to note that the designation of the transmedia state to each case study, was a process requiring multiple sessions of consideration, employing a negotiation of the relationships among franchise entries in terms of seriality. Not only did the thesis rely on textual observations, but on an incorporation of contextual sources to give insight into intertextual relationships. When considering the adaptation system, it became apparent that this designation is cursory at best, and to provide more extensive data it would be necessary to possess a far greater knowledge of potential property sources and to speculate the ways in which those sources were integrated into the game adaptation, or additionally, gain direct access to creators to determine from which prior texts they drew inspiration.

The framework for analysis elucidated throughout this study provides scholars with a tool to better understand the network of relationships that exist between textual, industrial, critical, and reception contexts with respect to film-to-game adaptation. It is hoped that by using this framework particular conceptual discoveries may be made via its application to other cases.

Suggestions for Further Research

Several strands of investigation emanating from, and associated with this thesis are worthy avenues for consideration in further research. Contemporary phenomena such as the toys-to-life genre is lacking in scholarly exploration. Major labels with multiple properties (e.g. Disney, Marvel) and their film tie-in practices as they relate to games, need to be addressed in the scholarship. In particular, the case of the canonisation of game content following the post-Disney purchase of the *Star Wars* franchise, and the ways in which LucasFilm / Disney create transmedia continuity would be a fruitful avenue of inquiry relating to contemporary advances in transmediality.

While this research has focused exclusively on films and film series adapted into videogames, the area of television-to-game adaptations certainly bears scholarly investigation.[185]

In terms of methodology, I would recommend researchers conduct in-depth interviews with industry sources working on film-licensed games, including developers as well as relevant personnel within publishing, and the license holder themselves. Focus groups with relevant franchise fans would also be of benefit for future studies in this area.

Coda

At the time of writing,[186] there are a number of industry examples that point towards a shifting approach to large-scale licensed games. The case of *Disney Infinity* represented an example of Disney's effort to find an alternative approach to the film-to-game adaptation, perhaps in an attempt to replicate the success of the TT Games's *LEGO* videogame series and LEGO playsets with a Disney toys-to-life product. Whilst this was a commercially successful foray in a new direction, ultimately it was short lived, suggesting that whilst the revenues were positive, the necessary revenue projections did not match to the costs associated with creating and maintaining this game ecosystem.

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[185] This would also include the game-television transmedia experiment *Quantum Break* (Microsoft Studios, 2016).
[186] The end of 2017.

EA's decision to close developer Visceral Games in late 2017 and cancel their *Star Wars* action-adventure game titled "Project Ragtag"[187] called into question the future of large-scale movie-licensed games. Sarkar (2017) believes that the economies of releasing such a game no longer hold in the current market, claiming that a game like Project Ragtag is an: "increasingly unsustainable style of video game: big-budget cinematic action games designed as linear single-player experiences" (Sarkar, 2017, n.p.). He points to such industry factors as AAA budgets, microtransactions, the suitability of games for live streaming and the need for multiplayer longevity as well as high player expectations.

In the wake of these failures is another approach by publishing giant EA who bought the rights for developing *Star Wars* games in 2013. With the November 2017 release of *Star Wars Battlefront II,* primarily a multiplayer FPS, a new strategy of large-scale movie-licensed titles emerged only weeks after the cancellation of Project Ragtag: an Extension Model adaptation with a multiplayer component. Most significantly, this adaptation incorporated a canonical interquel narrative into its feature set. Here, a number of factors seem key as to the direction being taken with movie-licensed titles: the potential demise of the exclusively single player campaign, the growth of microtransactions in the form of "loot boxes," and a necessity for online streaming capabilities. In a swift and urgent backlash, users reacted against the designed implementation of loot boxes with such extreme negativity[188] that EA was forced to take action, immediately discontinuing the functionality of loot box microtransactions. Subsequently, a wider industry backlash ensued with the discussion of the efficacy of single player games, as well as the questioning of the presence of microtransactions in games in the midst of development.[189]

Film-to-game adaptations has been fraught with problems, failure and "badness." Due to conditions of production that preclude quality outcomes, film-to-game adaptation

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[187] Jason Schreier's detailed development account of Project Ragtag is documented in his article "The Collapse of Visceral's Ambitious *Star Wars* Game" (Schreier, 2017, n.p.).

[188] At the end of 2017, the critic Metascore for the game stood at 68 / 100 whilst the user score was 0.9 / 10 collated from 7000 user reviews (http://www.metacritic.com/game/playstation-4/star-wars-battlefront-ii).

[189] See Jackson (2017) for a comprehensive timeline of the *Star Wars Battlefront II* controversy.

demonstrates over the history of videogames that technological convergence doesn't lead to positive results. Indeed, BADaptations have the potential to exhibit "subtractive comprehension" rather than transmedia's "additive comprehension," according to Neil Young (cited in Jenkins, 2006a, p. 123). Rather than the audience gaining a deeper and more exhaustive understanding of the properties' universe, they may be confused by mixed messages and come away with a lesser understanding of the property. The major case studies of this thesis are absolute exceptions to the general standard, of which the games discussed in Chapter 4 are far more representative. Game developers, license holders, and publishers each possess full knowledge of the pitfalls inherent in film-to-game adaptation, yet despite their best efforts of rectify the inherent problematic relationships between these entities, time and again the resultant game has failed the expectations of both critics and players. It can be inferred that this sense of failure also resides with those involved in the game's production, although there is little openly stated from the source to support this notion, as such admissions of negative feedback are closely guarded.

Due to all of these factors, movie-licensed games of high intrinsic quality may be somewhat rare in the future. It would seem essential for such a project to be shepherded through the production and development pipeline by filmmakers and game designers who share a collaborative creative vision and mutual respect, whilst being cognizant of issues in film-to-game adaptation, and also possessing the requisite political and financial influence to maintain control of the process. Contemporary instances of creative individuals who exhibit some of these characteristics have been discussed throughout the thesis, for example, the Waschowskis in their *Enter the Matrix* experiment through Warner Bros Interactive, Peter Jackson with his relationship with EA for the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and Ubisoft for *PJKK*, and James Cameron with *Avatar: The Game*. In all of these cases, while the filmmakers in question are at the forefront with digital visual effects, cinema capture and postproduction technology (which has a flow on effect in the digital realm of game development), none of them are trained in game design. It may be that a future type of screen creative would need to possess the requisite abilities to produce films in addition to designing games, thus opening up possibilities for transmedia commissar along the lines of Tim Kring (creator of the *Heroes* [2006–2010] transmedia franchise). If game designers were as culturally valued as film auteurs, this individual would possess the ability to lead a major game

project as well as a studio financed film project. As we know from Chapter 3, the lead time to develop a game is generally longer than the production of a film, so this individual would have to initiate the game development prior to them taking charge of the film production. This fictional individual needs to be a creative polymath with the cultural currency of Allegra Geller, the game designer from David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ* (1999).

As videogames mature, cultural regard as an art form increases, and thus the significance of a film-to-game adaptation will grow in stature and players' expectations of AAA movie-game adaptations will strengthen. Industry sources and transmedia pundits claim that audiences actively desire transmedia storytelling dimensions of their popular entertainment. If this does indeed come to fruition, then adult audiences of a film will be more inclined to extend their interest in the property by playing a game adaptation and therefore demand a similar quality experience from the game. As of this writing, numerous factors position the film-licensed game as an extremely difficult proposition for both developers and publishers; rising costs for 8th generation consoles are linked to ever increasing graphical fidelity and motion capture, and the necessity for high volume sales in a market of gamers with growing expectations affords additional pressures.

This thesis expands our understanding of the form and contexts of videogames licensed from films. The three adaptation models articulate a range of permutations of film-to-game remediation—reflecting the source film as in *GoldenEye 007* and *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy*, intersecting with the source film as in *Blade Runner* (1997), and acting as extensions of film properties as in *The Thing* (2002), *The Warriors* (2005), and *Alien: Isolation.* These three models incorporate concepts of film and game form, theories of adaptation and transmediality, industrial and creative practices, the textual dimensions of narrative form, world-building and interactivation, combined with accounts of game development, a synthesis of critical / player reception, and assessment of adaptation system and transmedia state. This framework of analysis makes a significant contribution to scholarship in that it advances new insight and clear guidance into the complex process and nature of film-to-game adaptation.

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Alien (Scott, 1979)

Alien 3 (Fincher, 1992)

Aliens (Cameron, 1986)

Aliens: Special Edition (Cameron, 1992)

Alien: Covenant (Scott, 2017)

The *Alien vs. Predator* series (2004–2007)

A Nightmare on Elm Street (Hooper, 1974)

A Nightmare on Elm Street (Bayer, 2010)

The Animatrix (Various, 2003)

Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979)

Assault on Precinct 13 (Carpenter, 1976)

Avatar (Cameron, 2009)

The Avengers (Whedon, 2012)

Avengers: Age of Ultron (Whedon, 2015)

A View to a Kill (Glen, 1985)

Being John Malkovich (Jonze, 1999)

The Black Hole (Nelson, 1979)

Blade Runner (Scott, 1982)

Blade Runner: The Director's Cut (Scott, 1997)

Blade Runner: Final Cut (Scott, 2007)

The Bourne Identity (Liman, 2002)

Captain America: The Winter Soldier (Russo bros., 2014)

The Chronicles of Riddick (Twohy, 2004)

Clueless (Heckerling, 1995)

D.A.R.Y.L. (Wincer, 1985)

Death Race 2000 (Bartel, 1975)

Deja-Vu (Scott, 2006)

Dr. No (Young, 1962)

Diamonds Are Forever (Hamilton, 1971)

Die Another Day (Tamahori, 2002)

Edge of Tomorrow (Liman, 2014)

Elysium (Blomkamp, 2013)

Escape from Alcatraz (Siegel, 1979)

Escape from New York (Carpenter, 1981)

ET: The Extra-Terrestrial (Spielberg, 1982)

eXistenZ (Cronenberg, 1999)

The *Fast and the Furious* series (2001–present)

Finding Nemo (Stanton, 2003)

From Russia With Love (Young, 1963)

The Godfather (Coppola, 1972)

The Godfather: Part II (Coppola, 1974)

GoldenEye (Campbell, 1995)

Goldfinger (Hamilton, 1964)

Godzilla (Edwards, 2014)

Groundhog Day (Ramis, 1993)

Hamlet (Branagh, 1996)

Hard Boiled (Woo, 1992)

The Hateful Eight (Tarantino, 2015)

Hidden (Haneke, 2005)

The Hidden Fortress (Kurosawa, 1958)

The *Hunger Games* series (2012–2015)

I, Robot (Proyas, 2004)

Inception (Nolan, 2010)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (Spielberg, 1989)

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (Spielberg, 1984)

Irreversible (Noe, 2002)

Jaws (Spielberg, 1975)

Jurassic Park (Spielberg, 1993)

Jurassic Park III (Johnston, 2001)

Jurassic World (Trevorrow, 2015)

King Kong (Cooper & Schoedsack, 1933)

King Kong (Jackson, 2005)

Kong: Skull Island (Vogt-Roberts, 2017)

The Last Starfighter (Castle, 1984)

The *LEGO Movie* series (2014–present)

License to Kill (Glen, 1984)

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (Jackson, 2001)

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (Jackson, 2003)

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (Jackson, 2002)

The Lost World: Jurassic Park (Spielberg, 1997)

Mad Max (Miller, 1979)

Mad Max 2 (Miller, 1981)

*M*A*S*H* (Altman, 1970)

The Matrix (Wachowski bros., 1999)

The Matrix Reloaded (Wachowski bros., 2003)

The Matrix Revolutions (Wachowski bros., 2003)

Mighty Joe Young (Schoedsack, 1949)

Mighty Joe Young (Underwood, 1998)

Moonraker (Gilbert, 1979)

Mortal Kombat (Anderson, 1995)

The Man with the Golden Gun (Hamilton, 1974)

The Mummy (Kurtzman, 2017)

The Naked City (Dassin, 1948)

Oblivion (Kosinski, 2013)

On Her Majesty's Secret Service (Hunt, 1969)

The *Paranormal Activity* series (2007–2015)

Pitch Black (Twohy, 2000)

Platoon (Stone, 1986)

Porky's (Clark, 1982)

Prometheus (Scott, 2012)

Psycho (Van Sant, 1998)

Quantum of Solace (Forster, 2008)

Riddick (Twohy, 2013)

The Ring series (1998–2017)

Rio Bravo (Hawks, 1959)

RoboCop (Verhoeven, 1987)

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story (Edwards, 2016)

Run Lola Run (Tykwer, 1998)

Russian Ark (Sokurov, 2002)

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World (Wright, 2010)

Se7en (Fincher, 1995)

Skyfall (Mendes, 2012)

Source Code (Jones, 2011)

Soylent Green (Fleischer, 1973)

The *Spider-Man* series (Raimi, 2002–2007)

Stalker (Tarkovsky, 1979)

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace (Lucas, 1999)

Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones (Lucas, 2002)

Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith (Lucas, 2005)

Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope (Lucas, 1977)

Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back (Kirshner, 1980)

Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi (Marquand, 1983)

Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens (Abrams, 2015)

Super Mario Bros. (Jankel & Morton, 1993)

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Hooper, 1974)

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Nispel, 2003)

The Thing (from Another World) (Nyby, 1951)

The Thing (Carpenter, 1982)

The Thing (van Heijningen Jr., 2011)

Thunderball (Young, 1965)

Timecode (Figgis, 2002)

Tomorrow Never Dies (Spottiswoode, 1997)

Tron (Lisberger, 1982)

Tron: Legacy (Kosinski, 2010)

You Only Live Twice (Gilbert, 1967)

The Warriors (Hill, 1979)

Westworld (Crichton, 1973)

The World is Not Enough (Apted, 1999)

Wreck-It Ralph (Moore, 2012)

Gameography

007 Legends (Activision, 2012)

Alien: Isolation (Sega, 2014)

Alien: Isolation – Crew Expendable (Sega, 2014)

Aliens: Colonial Marines (Sega, 2013)

Aliens Infestation (Sega, 2011)

A Nightmare on Elm Street (LJN, 1990)

Attack of the Mutant Camels (Llamasoft, 1983)

Batman Forever (Acclaim, 1995)

Beyond Good and Evil (Ubisoft, 2003)

BioShock (2K Games, 2007)

Blade Runner (CRL Group, 1985)

Blade Runner (Virgin, 1997)

The *Borderlands* series (2K Games, 2009–present)

Charlie's Angels (Ubisoft, 2003)

The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena (Atari, 2009)

The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay (Vivendi, 2004)

Cruis'n (Midway Games, 2007)

The *Crusi'n* series (Midway Games, 1994–present)

The Dark Knight (Pandemic, unreleased)

The Darkness (2K Games, 2007)

Dead Space (EA, 2008)

Death Race (Exidy, 1976)

Dick Tracy (Bandai, 1990)

Disney Infinity (Disney Interactive, 2013–2016)

Donkey Kong (Nintendo, 1982)

The *Donkey Kong Country* series (Nintendo, 1994–1996)

Doom (GT Interactive, 1993)

Double Dragon (Taito, 1987)

Dune II: The Battle for Arrakis (Virgin Interactive, 1992)

Enter the Matrix (Atari, 2003)

ET: The Extra-Terrestrial (Atari, 1982)

The *Fallout* series (Interplay & Bethesda, 1997–present)

Fallout 3 (Bethesda, 2008)

The Fast and the Furious (Raw Thrills, 2004)

The Fifth Element (Activision, 1998)

Final Fight (Capcom, 1989)

Finding Nemo (THQ, 2003)

Friday the 13th (LJN, 1989)

Ghostbusters: The Video Game (Vivendi, 2009)

GI Joe: Rise of the Cobra (EA, 2009)

The Godfather: The Game (EA, 2006)

The Godfather II (EA, 2009)

GoldenEye 007 (Nintendo, 1997)

GoldenEye 007 (Nintendo, 2010)

GoldenEye 007: Reloaded (Nintendo, 2011)

The *Grand Theft Auto* series (Rockstar, 1997–2013)

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Rockstar, 2004)

The *Half-Life* series (Valve, 1998 - 2007)

Half-Life 2 (Valve, 2004)

Halo (Microsoft Studios, 2001)

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II (EA, 2011)

Haven: Call of the King (Midway Games, 2002)

Heavy Rain (SCE, 2010)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure (LucasArts, 1989)

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis (LucasArts, 1992)

Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb (LucasArts, 2003)

The Incredibles (THQ, 2004)

James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing (EA, 2003)

James Bond 007: From Russia with Love (EA, 2005)

James Cameron's Avatar: The Game (Ubisoft, 2009)

Jaws (LJN, 1987)

Jet Set Radio (Sega, 2000)

Jurassic Park (Ocean Software, 1993)

The Karate Kid (LJN, 1987)

The *Killer Instinct* series (Midway and Nintendo, 1994–1996)

Kinect Star Wars (LucasArts, 2012)

The *Kingdom Hearts* series (Square Enix, 2002–present)

L.A. Noire (Rockstar, 2011)

The Last of Us (SCE, 2013)

The Legend of Zelda series (Nintendo, 1986–present)

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (Nintendo, 1998)

LEGO Dimensions (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015–2017)

LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures (LucasArts, 2008)

LEGO Jurassic World (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015)

LEGO Marvel's Avengers (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2016)

LEGO Star Wars: The Videogame (LucasArts, 2005)

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (LucasArts, 2006)

LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga (LucasArts, 2007)

LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015)

The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-earth (EA, 2004)

The Lord of the Rings Online (Turbine, 2007)

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (EA, 2003)

The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age (EA, 2004)

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (EA, 2002)

The *Madden NFL* series (EA, 1988–present)

Mad Max (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2015)

The *Manhunt* series (Rockstar, 2003–2007)

Manhunt (Rockstar, 2003)

The *Mass Effect* series (EA, 2007–2012)

Metal Gear Solid (Konami, 1998)

The *Metal Gear Solid* series (Konami, 1998–2015)

Mickey Mania (Sony Imagesoft, 1994)

Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor (Warner Bros. Interactive, 2014)

The Mummy Demastered (WayForward, 2017)

Myst (Broderbund, 1993)

The *No One Lives Forever* series (Fox Interactive / Sierra Entertainment, 2000–2003)

Pac-Man (Atari, 1982)

Parappa the Rapper (Sony, 1997)

Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie (Ubisoft, 2005)

PixelJunk Eden (Q-Games, 2008)

Platoon (Data East, 1987)

Pong (Atari, 1972)

Porky's (Atari, 1983)

Quake (GT Interactive, 1996)

Quantum Break (Microsoft Studios, 2016)

Raiders of the Lost Ark (Atari, 1982)

Rampage (Bally Midway, 1986)

Red Dead Redemption (Rockstar, 2010)

The *Resident Evil* series (Capcom, 1996–1999)

Rez (Sega, 2001)

Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Conspiracy (Sierra, 2008)

RoboCop (Data East, 1988)

Scarface: The World is Yours (Vivendi, 2006)

Shark Jaws (Atari, 1975)

Shogun: Total War (Creative Assembly, 2000)

The *Silent Hill* series (Konami, 1999–2012)

The Sims (EA, 2000)

Skylanders (Activision, 2011–present)

Spacewar! (Russell, 1962)

S.T.A.L.K.ER.: Shadow of Chernobyl (THQ, 2007)

Star Trek (Bandai Namco, 2013)

Star Wars (Atari, 1983)

Star Wars Battlefront II (EA, 2017)

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (Atari, 1982)

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (LucasArts, 2003)

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords (LucasArts, 2004)

Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader (LucasArts, 2001)

Stranglehold (Midway, 2007)

Streets of Rage, (Sega, 1991)

Superman (Atari, 1979)

Super Mario Bros. (Nintendo, 1985)

Temple Run (Imangi Studios, 2011)

Tennis for Two (Higinbotham, 1958)

Terminator Salvation (Equity, 2009)

Tetris (Various, 1984)

The Thing (Vivendi Universal, 2002)

The *Total War* series (Creative Assembly, 1999–present)

Transformers: Revenge of The Fallen (Activision, 2009)

Up (THQ, 2009)

Virtua Cop (Sega, 1994)

The Warriors (Rockstar, 2005)

The Warriors: Street Brawl (Paramount Digital Entertainment, 2009)

The *Wing Commander* series (Origin Systems and EA, 1990–2007)

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (CD Projekt RED, 2015)

Wolfenstein 3D (Apogee Software, 1992)

The X-Files Game (Fox Interactive, 1998)

X-Men Origins: Wolverine (Uncaged Edition) (Activision, 2009)